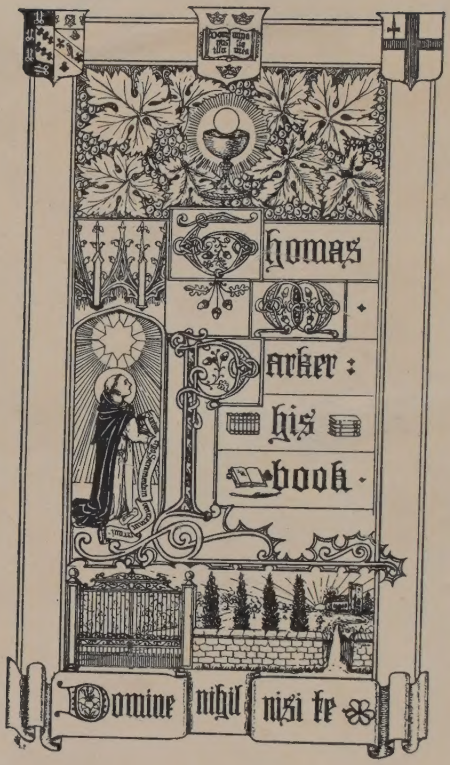
Thomas
Parker :
his
book ·
Domine nihil nisi te

STUPOR MUNDI

Frederick II.

from a Medallion in the Church della Porto Santo in Andria.

A6

STUPOR MUNDI

THE LIFE & TIMES OF FREDERICK II EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS KING OF SICILY AND JERUSALEM 1194–1250

By Lionel Allshorn

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STUPOR MUNDI

Chapter I

A HERITAGE OF STRIFE

THE arrogant and defiant assertion that man is the supreme controller of his own destinies can hardly be applied, even by the most rebellious intelligence, to those mortals who rule over the kingdoms of the world. However great the personality of a monarch may be, the success or failure of his reign and the magnitude of his power are governed by the temper and tendencies of his age. Our own Henry VIII owed the enjoyment of his absolute authority not primarily to his profound sagacity and dominating will, but to the fact that the men of his century were eager to secure the peace and order that a benevolent despotism brings in its train. And the unhappy Charles was the victim, not so much of his own unstable mind and wavering purpose, as of the gradual revulsion of feeling in a nation which, grown strong and self-confident under the good governance of the Tudor dynasty, was now eager to free itself from the controlling power which had led it into the haven of peace.

Amid the countless examples which History furnishes of this subjection of kings to circumstance, there is none more striking than the career of the Emperor Frederick the Second. This magnificent prince, whom his own contemporaries regarded with amazement and hailed as the "Wonder of the World," and whom a historian of our own age has signalised as "the most gifted of the sons of man; by nature the more than peer of Alexander, of Constantine and of Charles,"[1] is denied by posterity the title of "Great" which has been frequently bestowed upon lesser men. His enlightened mind, his energy, his strength and his genius, should have resulted in a reign of a glory rarely paralleled in the history of mankind. Yet through the heritage of strife to which he succeeded, through the formidable power, the overweening ambition and the implacable hatred of the Papacy, he was denied the part of a Builder and compelled to do the work of an architect who seeks to maintain a crumbling edifice and uphold it against the assaults of time. Throughout his life he was occupied in defending the rights of the Empire against the power that assailed it, and thus he was prevented from that work of construction which History demands of those whom she will honour with the verdict of greatness.

In order to comprehend Frederick's position and the power and pretensions of his enemy, it is necessary to recall to mind the development of the Mediæval Empire and the Papacy, and the gradual enmity that arose

[1] Freeman. *Historical Essays* (First Series): "Frederick II."

between them. In the year 476 the throne of the Western Empire became vacant through the deposition of Romulus Augustulus by Odoacer, who sent the Imperial insignia to his patron, the Eastern Emperor, at Constantinople. For over three centuries there was no Emperor at Rome, until there arose in the West a giant whose power qualified him to fill with dignity the ancient throne of the Cæsars. Pippin, King of the Franks, had defended the Pope of Rome against the Lombards and had bestowed certain rich lands on the spiritual power. In 768 Charlemagne succeeded Pippin and extended his sway over many of the nations that had once acknowledged Rome as their master, converting reluctant pagans by the argument of the sword. In 800 this conqueror of the heathen appeared in Rome to rescue the Pope from a hostile faction of the populace. In admiration for his militant Christianity and in gratitude to his house, Leo III crowned him with the Imperial Crown in the Church of St. Peter and proclaimed him Cæsar and Augustus.

The initiative of the revival of the Empire thus belonged to the Pope, and the crown of Empire was bestowed by him. His successors were not slow to assert that what the Pope had given the Pope could take away. Here, then, were already two factors which contributed to the aggrandisement of the Papacy and to the strife of later centuries. Pippin had laid the foundation of the temporal power of the Papacy and thus inoculated the pontiffs with the desire for territorial expansion. Charles, by accepting the crown from Leo, had made

possible the claim to the power of deposition and the superiority which that power implied. Charles added yet a third by freeing the whole body of the clergy from the jurisdiction of the temporal courts, in criminal as well as civil cases. The ecclesiastical courts, thus strengthened, gradually extended their jurisdiction over the laity, and acquired the right to try all cases relating to marriage, wills, perjury, or concerning widows, orphans or crusaders, on the ground that all such cases were connected with religion. Further, since all crime was sin, and therefore a spiritual matter meet to be dealt with by the Church, they claimed the right to try all criminal cases.

Thus by the end of the twelfth century the Church had absorbed a great part of the criminal administration of both laity and clergy. Naturally the Pope, as the head of the Church, became the supreme court of appeal in all cases amenable to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. He thus assumed the attribute of the fountain of justice for the whole of Christendom, while Emperors, Kings and princes bore the sword, according to this ambitious conception, simply as his ministers to carry into effect his sentences and decrees.

Soon after the death of Charlemagne the Empire fell into decay and was not revived until 962, when Otho the Great secured the Imperial Crown to the German race.[1] It henceforth became the rule that

[1] It was in Otho's day that the Empire became known as the "Holy Roman Empire," though, as Voltaire remarks with some justice, "it was neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire."

whoever was elected by the German princes as their king had a right to the crown of Italy and also to the Imperial title. A century after this revival the Papacy, which had also sunk into degradation and discredit, was rescued from a humiliating bondage to the various factions in Rome by Henry III. This Emperor, forgetting his worldly wisdom in his zeal for Christianity, determined to put an end to the line of vicious and dissolute Popes who had long occupied the throne of St. Peter. Exerting his authority as protector of the Church, he nominated for the holy office a series of devout and strong-minded men, and thus restored the moral repute of a power which was to bring his successors to ruin.

In 1073 Gregory VII, or Hildebrand, was elected to the Papal Chair, and flung down the gage of battle with the secular authority. Discarding with scorn the theory that the Pope and the Emperor were two co-equal world powers, ordained to act in conjunction for the general good of Christendom, he asserted that "the spiritual power was to stand related to the temporal power as the sun to the moon." He conceived the ambitious ideal of an universal theocracy, with the Pope at its head as God's Vicar on earth. For the attainment of this ideal he instituted two reforms to strengthen his influence,—the enforcement of clerical celibacy and the suppression of simony.

It was inevitable that this latter reform should result in conflict with the monarchs of Europe. The evil of simony had grown up side by side with feudalism.

Abbots and bishops had secured the protection that was so necessary in those turbulent times by becoming the vassals of powerful barons and princes. When once a prelate had paid homage for his estates and temporalities, these became a permanent fief of the overlord, were subject to the same feudal obligations as a lay fief, and were at the disposition of the patron when the office became vacant. The temporal rulers throughout Christendom were thus securing the control of the most important ecclesiastical appointments, and it frequently resulted that a vacant bishopric would be virtually sold to the highest bidder, or bestowed without any regard to the moral character of the recipient. Moreover, the authority of the Pope was naturally weakened by this dependence of his prelates on feudal lords and by the acquisition of those lords of the power of nomination to vacancies.

Hildebrand, ever scornful of moderate measures, struck fiercely at the root of the evil with a reform which was as impracticable as it was subversive of established order. He issued decrees sternly forbidding the clergy to receive investiture for a church, abbey or bishopric, from the hands of a temporal lord. This was nothing more or less than an attempt to wrest out of the hands of the lords and princes of Christendom their authority over the vast ecclesiastical domains that lay within their territory. When it is remembered that the Church was then in possession of nearly one-fourth of the lands in the great countries of the West, the magnitude of this attempted change becomes clear. The success of

the reform would make the Pope the actual overlord of all these wide territories, and would fatally weaken the authority of every temporal ruler in Christendom, who would see their diminished possessions interspersed with innumerable estates owing allegiance to an independent power.

The immoderate attempt of Hildebrand aroused opposition on every side, but the fiercest conflict raged in Germany. The Emperor-elect, King Henry IV, threatened with excommunication and deposition for his opposition to the reform, gathered a council of such of the prelates of the Empire as dared to answer to his summons and ordered Hildebrand to descend from the Papal throne. The infuriated Pope gathered a council in his turn at Rome and issued the dread sentence of excommunication and deposition. "In the name of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost," ran the solemn decree, "I withdraw, through St. Peter's power and authority, from Henry the King, son of Henry the Emperor, who has arisen against the Church with unheard-of insolence, the rule over the whole kingdom of the Germans and over Italy. And I absolve all Christians from the bond of the oath which they have made or shall make to him; and I forbid anyone to serve him as king."

If in later days the frequency of the sentence deprived it of some of its terrors, this first deposition of a monarch was salutary in its effects. Henry's authority seemed to slip entirely out of his hands. Encouraged by the Papal sanction a large number of his subjects revolted, and he

was shunned by many of his firmest friends and supporters as a man accursed of Heaven. There ensued the memorable scene at Canossa. Henry followed Hildebrand in penitence to a stronghold in the Apennines, and for three days, clad in sackcloth and with feet bared to the snow, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the successor of Charlemagne and the Cæsars, awaited the Pope's forgiveness in the courtyard of the castle. On the fourth day the penitent was admitted to the Papal presence and the sentence which had brought him to this abject submission was revoked. Henry was soon able to revenge himself upon Hildebrand, but the humiliation at Canossa struck a severe blow at the Imperial prestige and increased that of the Papacy to a corresponding degree. The successors of Hildebrand continued the struggle with the unrepentant Emperor and incited his own son to rebel against him. Henry finally died of a broken heart. After further strife between the representatives of the rival powers, this first stage of the great struggle, known as the Investiture Contest, was brought to a close in 1122 by the Concordat of Worms, which applied a reasonable remedy to the evil which Hildebrand had attempted to eradicate in so drastic a fashion. There followed a few years of peace, and then the great house of Hohenstaufen appeared upon the scene and took up the gage against the aggressor of the Imperial rights.

In the meantime the Papal influence was gaining great strength from another source. The Crusades, which commenced at the end of the eleventh century,

were initiated and directed by the successors of St. Peter. The prominent part which the Popes took in these enterprises naturally fostered their authority and enhanced their prestige. The resources of Christendom were placed in the hands of the Papacy, and the vast wealth collected for the maintenance of these costly expeditions was to a large extent at the disposal of the Pope, who was not always too conscientious to employ it against his Christian enemies. Moreover, the call to a Crusade was a formidable weapon which the Vicar of Christ frequently wielded against a monarch who was growing too powerful and too independent to please him. If the unhappy sovereign refused to squander his wealth and endanger his life by embarking for the Holy Land at the Papal summons, the dread sentence of excommunication was his punishment. If he obeyed the call and met with disaster and the shame of failure that so many Crusaders encountered, he returned with reduced power and prestige, and was less able to resist the Papal encroachments. "It was thus," writes Milman, "by trammelling their adversaries with vows which they could not decline and from which they could not extricate themselves; by thus consuming their wealth and resources on this wild and remote warfare, that the Popes, who themselves decently eluded, or were prevented by age or alleged occupations from embarkation in these adventurous expeditions, broke and wasted away the power and influence of the Emperors." The Hohenstaufens suffered again and again from this unsaintly policy of the Popes.

The founder of the greatness of the house of Hohenstaufen was one Frederick, a knight of Suabia, who served the unhappy Emperor, Henry IV. In return for a rare and unswerving loyalty, Henry bestowed upon Frederick the hand of his daughter Agnes, with the Duchy of Suabia as her dower. Frederick built himself a new abode high on the hill of Staufen, and hence the family took the name of Hohenstaufen. The next generation of the house, which consisted of two sons, Frederick and Conrad, served their uncle, the Emperor Henry V, and on his death in 1125 inherited all his ancestral possessions, including a deadly enmity with the house of Guelf.[1] Thirteen years later, Conrad the Hohenstaufen and Henry the Guelf appeared as rival candidates for the Imperial Crown. Conrad succeeded in gaining the suffrages of the Electors and was crowned by the Pope's Legate at Aix-la-Chapelle[2] (1138).

The first Hohenstaufen Emperor was not allowed the leisure to build up too formidable a power. Five years after his election he was called to a Crusade. Reluctant to neglect the task of consolidating the Imperial authority

[1] From which our present King traces his descent.

[2] The disappointed Guelfs soon came to blows with the successful Conrad. In the conflicts which ensued the two battle-cries "Ho! for Guelf!" and "Ho! for Waiblingen!" (a castle of the Hohenstaufens) were used. These names, the latter corrupted into "Ghibelline," were afterwards carried into Italy, where they were employed to describe the two factions whose struggles disturbed the peace of Italy for three centuries or more. The Ghibellines were the supporters of the Imperial party and the Guelfs the partisans of the anti-Imperial or Papal party. Every Italian city had its Guelf and Ghibelline faction, who were constantly at strife with one another.

in Italy, Conrad at first refused. He was, however, reduced to obedience by the threat of excommunication, and in 1147 led a vast German host towards the East. Cheated and starved by their Greek allies and harassed unceasingly by their Turkish enemies, the Crusaders were compelled to retreat, after over 60,000 of their number had succumbed to heat, famine, pestilence, or the sword. The next year Conrad was again urged to journey to the Holy Land. He joined King Louis of France at Jerusalem, and though he gained great renown for personal valour, he was again unsuccessful. He returned to Germany and died in 1152.

Although he had led his subjects to disaster, Conrad had earned the admiration of Germany by his courage and strength, and his nephew was elected in his place. The red-bearded Frederick I, or Barbarossa, as he is more commonly called, is one of the national heroes of the Fatherland. During a reign of forty years, he brought an internal peace and order to Germany greater than she had known since the days of Otho the Great. He secured the homage of the Kings of Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and Pomerania, and the great Diet which he held at Mayence in 1184, and which was attended by 40,000 knights, was a striking demonstration of the might of his German sovereignty. Yet all his power was unable to secure for him an effective control over the turbulent cities of Northern Italy. Influenced by lofty ideas of the Imperial authority, he made repeated efforts to revive the more substantial dominion of Charlemagne and Otho. The great Italian towns,

headed by Milan and assisted by the Pope Alexander III, finally formed themselves into the Lombard League, which, in 1176, inflicted an overwhelming defeat on Barbarossa and his German host on the field of Legnano. A truce for six years was made after this battle and was followed by the Treaty of Constance. The Emperor was compelled to grant the right of private war and the privilege of self-jurisdiction to the untameable cities, on condition that their respective Podestas should receive investiture from his deputy and that they should furnish him with provisions whenever he should pass through Italy. They thus became republican states with only a nominal subjection to the Empire.

It is needless to say that Barbarossa incurred the violent enmity of the Papacy. The state of tension that always existed between the two parties was well instanced by an incident which occurred at the Diet of Besançon, held in the early part of Frederick's reign. Two Papal Legates appeared with complaints from Pope Adrian. In the course of the argument which followed, one of the Legates haughtily enquired: "From whom does the King hold his power if not from the Pope?" Whereupon a German baron sprang up and was with difficulty prevented by the Emperor from striking the Papal official down with his sword. When the feeling between the two parties was as bitter as this, it was not likely to be long before they drifted into open strife. Barbarossa was unwise enough to give the occasion for a rupture. Adrian died in 1159 and the cardinals could not come to a unanimous decision in electing his

successor. Fourteen voted for Alexander III and nine for Victor IV. Frederick called a general council to settle the matter, but Alexander, who considered himself to be duly elected by the majority, resented this interference, and as the Emperor persisted in his refusal to recognise him, the sentence of excommunication was again proclaimed. Frederick therefore actively espoused the cause of Victor, and for some years Europe was bewildered by the existence of two Popes.

Barbarossa was at this time at the height of his power, and his successes against the Lombard cities so alarmed Alexander that he fled to France. There was open enmity between Pope and Emperor for fourteen years, until Frederick was finally brought to submission by the victory of the Lombard League, the Pope's allies, at Legnano. The two enemies met at Venice and once again the successor of the Cæsars humbled himself before the successor of St. Peter. Overcome by some outburst of emotion, Frederick cast off his purple mantle and flung himself on his knees before the venerable Pope, who raised him and bestowed the kiss of peace.

There was no further breach with the Papacy during Barbarossa's lifetime. Indeed, all Christendom was brought into temporary unison by the news, which arrived in Europe in 1187, that the Sepulchre of Christ had once again fallen into the hands of the infidels. Richard of England and Philip of France took the cross and set out by sea for the Holy Land. Barbarossa, though well stricken in years, was not one to linger at the call of duty. The grand old warrior girded on his sword, summoned

his vassals around him, and marched overland to join the monarchs of England and France at Acre. Much might have been accomplished had his life been spared, for the mutual animosity of Richard and Philip would have been subdued by the presence of the renowned Emperor. But almost at the threshold of Syria a tragic death overtook him. His army was slowly crossing a river by a narrow bridge and the impatient Hohenstaufen plunged into the swiftly flowing stream to gain the opposite bank. The tide overpowered his aged limbs and he was brought to land a lifeless corpse. His sorrowing followers bore the remains of their Father and Lord to Antioch, and disheartened and saddened by his loss, only a remnant reached Acre.

Henry VI, who succeeded him, had many of his father's virile qualities and a double share of the Hohenstaufen taint of cruelty. To him belongs the odium of having participated in the imprisonment of Richard Cœur de Lion on his return from the Crusade. We can imagine that Barbarossa, had he been alive, would have acted very differently towards the impetuous and dauntless English hero, who in so many ways was a man after his own heart.

Henry added to the Hohenstaufen dominions those lands which were to be the chief delight of his Imperial son. By his marriage with Constance, the rightful heir to the crown of Sicily, Henry had a lawful claim, not only to that island itself, but also to the southern half of the Italian peninsula. Soon after his accession to the Imperial dignity he led a German host into his

new dominions, which had been seized by the usurper Tancred. His first campaign, though not entirely successful, was followed by another which reduced all opposition. The cruelties which he practised towards his defeated enemies were so barbarous that he was laid under the sentence of excommunication. Celestine, however, who at this time occupied the chair of St. Peter, was a feeble character, and Henry's only answer was to seize many of the lands which the Church claimed in the south.

The acquisition of the lordship of Sicily and Naples was to prove a doubtful blessing to the Imperial cause. Hedged in to the north and south by the hated Hohenstaufen power, the bitter enmity of the Papacy was now rendered doubly persistent by the fear for its independence. There was henceforth to be no chance of a lasting peace until one of the two warring powers should be crushed into the dust.

It was thus to no heritage of fair peace that the son of Henry was destined to succeed, but to a crown made heavy with a weight of hatred; a hatred that could cloak itself under the mask of religion, could enlist in its service all the fanaticism and superstition of the Age of Faith, and that could drown the defensive cry of "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," with the sanction of supreme power—"See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."

Chapter II

THE CHILD OF MOTHER CHURCH

ON the 24th day of December, in the year 1194, treachery and vengeance were abroad in the land of Sicily. Henry the Emperor had given fair promises to the wife, the children and the followers of the usurper Tancred, and enticed them into his power. There followed a mockery of judgment and a bloody assize. The boy William, the usurper's son, was deprived of his manhood by mutilation, blinded with hot irons, and sent with his mother and sisters to a dungeon in the Alps. The prelates and barons who had fallen into the snare of the fowler were tortured, burnt, buried alive, or more mercifully hanged. On the same day that the Emperor was enjoying this barbarous revenge a man-child was born to him in Jesi, a town of Apulia.

The Empress Constance, who was now forty, had been married to Henry eight years, and there had been no former child of the marriage. In anticipation, therefore, of the calumnies which might arise, she gave as much publicity to the actual entrance of the child into the world as decency and her Imperial dignity would allow. This, however, was not sufficient to silence lying tongues, and the rumour was spread that the Empress had passed

the age of child-bearing and that the son of a butcher of Jesi had been brought into her bed and passed off as her own child. Unwilling to allow her son Frederick to be burdened with the weight of this slander, the Imperial mother laid aside her pride and, before an audience of Italian matrons, underwent a humiliating ordeal to prove that she was still capable of the honours of maternity. Her brave conduct was rewarded by the virtual suppression of the calumny, though once or twice it was raised from its obscurity by the more hysterical of Frederick's enemies.

The child's birth was hailed by Henry with considerable joy and the court poet poured forth a torrent of verses on the auspicious occasion. The parents were, however, too busy with affairs of state, and constant journeyings to and fro, to attend to the rearing of the babe, and he was left at Foligno in the care of a noble Italian lady. Before he had attained his third birthday his father died and the prospects of the young Frederick assumed a precarious aspect. The Electors of Germany, in spite of an oath which they had sworn to Henry, ignored the child entirely in their election of a new Emperor. The crown of Sicily, as a hereditary possession, was not disputed and he was crowned at Palermo in 1198; but the Kingdom quickly relapsed into anarchy and the royal authority was of little account. Constance realised the urgent necessity of a powerful protector who would guard the child's interests, and in spite of many misgivings, she was compelled to apply to the Pope.

The present holder of that dignity, Innocent III,

was the most vigorous character who had occupied the Chair of St. Peter since the days of Hildebrand. He raised the power of the Papacy to a height that it had never before attained and never afterwards excelled. Before his death in 1216 he had secured the complete vassalage of the King of Arragon; he had gained a signal triumph over the proud Philip Augustus of France and compelled him, after a protracted excommunication, to reinstate his divorced wife; he had become the overlord of the crafty John of England, and although the sturdy patriotism of the English barons saved that country from becoming a mere fief of the Papacy, she continued for sixty years to be the treasure-house of Rome, and was drained of her wealth to provide the Popes with the resources for their struggle with the Emperors.

Innocent, therefore, seemed a powerful protector for the young Frederick, and he was perfectly willing, in his capacity as the father of orphans, to take the child under his protection. His motives, however, were very far from disinterested, and he seized the opportunity offered by the friendless position of the child and his mother to drive a very hard bargain with Constance. He revived a baseless claim which the Papacy had long made to the overlordship of Sicily and Apulia, and granted them back to the Empress and her son as his vassals. The lands are thus detailed in Innocent's letter: "The Kingdom of Sicily, the Duchy of Apulia and Principality of Capua, with all its appurtenances, Naples, Salerno and Amalfi, with their appurtenances, Marcia and the other lands beyond Marcia, to which the Royal pair have a right"

A Legate was sent to receive the oath of fealty and homage from the new vassals of Rome. They were further required to pay a yearly tribute, and this was to be supplemented, during Frederick's minority, by a payment of 30,000 golden tarins and whatever the Pope might expend in the defence of the Kingdom. The Crown was to surrender its claim to the nomination of bishops, who were henceforth to have the right to appeal from the King to Rome. Lastly, the clergy were to be judged by their own courts in all cases except high treason.

The protection bought at so heavy a price was soon urgently needed. Constance died at the end of 1198 and bequeathed the four-year-old orphan to the guardianship of Innocent. The Pope wrote a letter of consolation to his young ward, wherein he said : " God has not spared the rod ; he has taken away your father and mother : yet He has given you a worthier father, His Vicar, and a better mother, the Church." In days to come, the Church, as Milman remarks, was to act rather as the stepmother than the mother of Frederick.

For three years after the death of Constance the confusion in the Kingdom [1] was so great that Frederick was without a home. One chronicle tells us that he was passed about between the houses of the burghers of Palermo, staying a week at one, a month at another, according to the means of his hosts. It was in one of these houses that he was visited by a strange and prophetic

[1] The Kingdom of Sicily comprised the southern half of Italy, as well as the island.

dream, that seemed to foreshadow his future struggles with Rome. He was heard one night to cry out loudly in his sleep : " I cannot ! I cannot ! " and when he was questioned the next morning, he replied : " I seemed to be eating all the bells in the world, and I saw one great bell, which I tried to swallow, but it seemed to kill me ; and on that account I cried out."

Meanwhile Innocent was not idle in Frederick's cause, which, through his overlordship, had now become largely his own. The first enemy to be subdued was Markwald, who had followed Henry from Germany into the South, and had afterwards, with many other German barons, betrayed an active reluctance to leave these fair lands, which afforded so tempting a prey to the adventurer. On the death of Constance he had claimed the regency of Sicily and gathered around his banner all the German intruders. Innocent excommunicated him and his robbers in vain. The Saracens of the mountains allied themselves with Markwald in the cause of anarchy, and the Pope was compelled to send an army into Sicily. In 1200 the two forces met before the walls of Palermo, from which the child Frederick was an anxious spectator of the bloody battle that ensued. Victory fell to the Pope's general and was followed by a further success. Two years later the death of Markwald freed Frederick from one of his enemies.

The young King was now installed in the royal palace of Palermo and his private education commenced. The Archbishop of Taranto and the notary John of Trajetto were entrusted with the general supervision of his studies.

Strangely enough, Mussulman scholars were appointed to instruct him in the various branches of learning. They were undoubtedly the most learned men of the day, but it is some cause for wonder that the education of the Pope's ward should have been entrusted, during his tender years, to the care of infidels. The result was that Frederick's mind was so broadened that he was unable, in future years, to adopt the prevailing attitude of narrow and fanatical hatred towards the followers of Islam that was essential in the orthodox and complete Christian.

The young King had now a royal palace for home and servants around him, but in other respects his position was still unhappy. He was king only in name, and was desperately poor; he was surrounded by intrigue; his person was the objective of every ambitious adventurer who sought to assume the title of Regent; his dominions were devastated by anarchy. It would be tedious to relate all the conflicts which raged throughout Sicily and Southern Italy for several years; but some idea of the miserable state of affairs by which the child was surrounded may be gathered from this quaint and pathetic letter which he addressed to the Kings of Europe in his tenth or eleventh year :—

"*To all the Kings of the world, and to all the Princes of the universe, from the innocent boy, King of Sicily, called Frederick; greeting in God's name.*

"Assemble yourselves, ye nations; draw nigh, ye kings; hasten hither, ye princes, and see if any sorrow be like unto my sorrow! My parents died ere I could

know their caresses ; I did not deserve to see their faces ; and I, like a gentle lamb among wolves, fell into slavish dependence upon men of various tribes and tongues. I, the offspring of so august a union, was handed over to servants of all sorts, who presumed to draw lots for my garments and for my royal person. Germans, Tuscans, Sicilians, barbarians, conspired to worry me. My daily bread, my drink, my freedom, are all measured out to me in scanty proportion. No king am I ; I am ruled instead of ruling ; I beg favours instead of granting them. My subjects are silly and quarrelsome. Since, therefore, my Redeemer liveth, and can raise me out of such a pool of misery, again and again I beseech you, O ye princes of the earth, to aid me to withstand slaves, to set free the son of Cæsar, to raise up the Crown of my kingdom, and to gather together again the scattered people ! Unless you avenge me, you yourselves will fall into like dangers."

By 1208, however, a measure of peace was restored to the unhappy Kingdom, and the Pope determined to secure a matrimonial alliance for his ward. Frederick had narrowly escaped the bonds of wedlock when only eight years old. Innocent had attempted to gain for him the hand of a sister of the King of Arragon, but the negotiations were prolonged for several years, until finally the proposed bride died. Her elder sister was then chosen in her place, and in 1208 Innocent wrote to Pedro urging him to delay the match no longer. " Your sister," ran the Papal missive, " will have a noble husband, the offspring of Emperors and Kings ; he is of royal blood

both by father and mother. He is endowed with virtues beyond his years; he is passing from the gate of boyhood into years of discretion at a quicker pace than usual, whence we may expect the happiest results. His Kingdom is rich and noble; it is the navel and harbour of other realms; it will be of advantage to Arragon, and it is especially beloved by us, being the peculiar possession of the successor of St. Peter."

The proposed match was one that is curious enough to modern eyes. The boy Frederick was only fourteen and a half years of age. The lady, Constance, was at any rate ten years his senior and was a widow. She had married the King of Hungary and borne him a child when her second husband was only nine. The disparity in age was, however, ignored by Innocent and Pedro, though we are unacquainted with the sentiments of the two persons who were most intimately concerned in the matter.

In 1209 all obstacles to the alliance were overcome, and Constance, attended by five hundred knights, sailed to Palermo and was united to her youthful bridegroom amidst great rejoicings. In spite of the fact that their own inclinations had not been consulted, the royal pair seem to have quickly adapted themselves to circumstances, and a very real affection grew up between them. It must have been of great advantage to Frederick to have a wife of mature years and considerable experience to counsel him in his difficult position. He also secured a more tangible gain. The lady not only brought a handsome dowry with her, but the knights who had conducted

her from Arragon were employed by the young King to establish a more effective sway over Apulia.

The improvement of his prospects, the dignity of matrimony and the change from childhood to adolescence now made Frederick yearn for a little more independence and power. The new Queen, moreover, was apparently a lady of considerable spirit and encouraged her husband in his increasing dislike of the Pope's too officious overlordship, which was very much in evidence at the Sicilian Court. Soon after his marriage we hear of the first acts of rebellion on the part of Frederick against his guardian's authority. The bishopric of Palermo became vacant, and the Canons for some reason betrayed a great reluctance to proceed to the election of a successor. Frederick urged them to fulfil their duty and, as they still delayed, commanded them to elect his own nominee. The Canons refused and appealed to the Pope, whereupon the young King flew into a royal passion and banished them from the Kingdom. This act called forth a strong letter of rebuke from Innocent. "We are amazed," he wrote, "at the conduct of your advisers. Do not usurp our office in things spiritual; be content with the temporal power which you hold from us. Beware of the doom of Uzzah and Uzziah; lay not hands upon the Ark! It is quite a mistake on your part to think that we conferred to your mother that privilege concerning appeals to Rome by the Sicilian Clergy, of which you speak; we refused it on her sending ambassadors to us. Do you persevere in your reverence to Rome and recall the Canons."

We do not know whether Frederick yielded to the demand of Innocent, but next year he again displeased the Pope. Queen Constance urged him to dismiss the Chancellor of the Kingdom, who had been appointed by Innocent and betrayed too great an anxiety for self-aggrandisement. He was accordingly banished from the Court and another letter of admonishment was the result. "As you are now past the age of childhood," wrote Innocent, "you should put away childish things. . . . The Bishop of Catania, Chancellor of the Realm, has been your guardian hitherto and has undergone many toils and sorrows on your behalf. But now, forgetful of his services, you take no notice of him. . . . Recall the Chancellor forthwith and take his advice henceforth; let no one assail him, or we shall take it as an outrage done to ourselves." Frederick, however, refused to obey these haughty commands, and the Chancellor was not recalled.

Early in the year 1212 the young King, who was now seventeen, was presented by his wife with a son. The infant was named Henry and was crowned at Palermo as joint ruler of the Kingdom with his father. Frederick's position was now daily improving and his authority was respected throughout Sicily, if not on the mainland. He was able to reward faithful followers with grants of various kinds. The Church in Sicily and Apulia was specially favoured. The Teutonic Order of Knights, which had been formed shortly after the death of Barbarossa to succour the sick and wounded German crusaders and pilgrims, received various lands and privileges. This

order was to be Frederick's loyal supporter and constant friend throughout his life.

Some few weeks after the birth of a son to Frederick a summons came from Germany which was to effect a rapid and considerable change in his fortunes. On the death of the Emperor Henry VI, and the election which ensued, the infant son of that Emperor had been entirely ignored as a possible claimant to the throne, in spite of an oath which had been sworn to Henry by many of the Electors. The votes of the majority had been cast for Philip, the brother of the late Emperor, and those of the minority for Otho of Brunswick, the head of the house of Guelf. A civil war immediately broke out between the two rival claimants and raged with extraordinary violence for twelve years. It was an age of cruelty, and the mutual hatred of Hohenstaufen and Guelf found expression in the most barbarous reprisals, in which neither age nor sex was spared. A young nun who fell into the hands of some Guelf soldiers was stripped naked, smeared with honey, rolled in feathers and paraded through the streets on horseback with her face to the tail. These same soldiers were then captured by Philip's supporters and boiled in hot water for punishment. The Abbot of Gall seized six of the principal burghers of Arbon and cut off their feet, in revenge for a similar mutilation inflicted on one of his servants, whose only offence was that he had been found stealing fuel in a forest. These are merely instances of the savagery with which the war was pursued.

Innocent was the only power who might have brought

this devastating strife to an end by definitely throwing the moral weight of the Papal approval on the side of one candidate. It suited his plans, however, to see Germany wasting her strength in internecine warfare and he held his hand, unwilling to support the Hohenstaufens and afraid to incur their anger when they seemed the more likely to succeed. Finally, however, Philip gained the advantage, and Innocent was compelled to recognise him as Emperor. The Guelf seemed thoroughly disheartened and broken, when the crime of one man intervened to wrest the fruits of success from Philip's hands. He was assassinated by a private enemy, and his leaderless party lost heart. Otho gained a rapid ascendancy, journeyed to Rome, and was joyfully crowned by Innocent in 1209.

If the Pope exulted at the defeat of the Hohenstaufen party, he soon found that the Guelf Emperor was to prove just as refractory as any of the Hohenstaufens had been. Otho had taken various vows of obedience to Innocent at his Coronation, and immediately commenced to break them. Among other engagements he had promised to work no harm to the Pope's ward, Frederick. In 1210, however, he led an army into the young King's Italian dominions, and was joined by several turbulent nobles. Within a year he had conquered the greater part of the mainland and was threatening Frederick in Sicily, when he was summoned back to Germany by the news of a sudden reversal of his fortunes in that country. The flouted Pope had excommunicated him for his broken vows, and the Hohenstaufen party, reinforced by many of Otho's former supporters whom he had alienated by

his arrogance or by his excommunication, had again taken the field.

The Princes of the Empire now bethought themselves of the neglected scion of the house of Hohenstaufen, the grandson of their old Lord, Barbarossa, and the son of their former Emperor Henry. They had had their fill of anarchy and civil war and thought with regret of the days when the Emperors of that house had made Germany strong and glorious. 'The Child of Sicily,' as he was called in Germany, must now be nearing manhood, and rumour spoke of the high qualities that promised to develop with advancing years. Accordingly the Princes gathered themselves together. The Archbishop of Mayence, the Prelates of Magdeburg and Trèves, the King of Bohemia, the Landgrave of Thuringia, and the Dukes of Austria and Bavaria, all these high dignitaries assembled at Nuremburg in the October of 1211. They deposed Otho as a heretic and decided to elect the young Frederick of Sicily.

The document they drew up to record this resolution is interesting for two reasons—it gives the Germans' own conception of the Holy Roman Empire, and it voices the reports which had reached Germany of the character of their future Emperor.

"God Almighty, seeing by Adam's fall that mankind would abuse free will, and would become involved in the nets of contention, set up the Holy Roman Empire that its Lord, like a God upon earth, might rule kings and nations and maintain peace and justice. After the Greek Emperors ceased to do their duty, Holy Mother Church

and the Roman Senate and people, recalling the said Empire, transplanted its root into mighty Germany, that this dominion might be propped up by our stately princes, our vigorous knights, and our most brave warriors. The Empire without a head is like a ship in a storm without a master pilot. Heresies are springing up and the universal Church is being harassed. Bees are scattered when they lose their queen; so kingdoms, if unrestrained by a bit, go to ruin. The sun is eclipsed; the world needs an Emperor to check disorders. The nations have cried aloud to God, who has awoke from sleep and bethought him of the Empire. He has inspired us, the Princes of Germany who have the right of election, to draw nigh to the throne and to meet together in one place, as is our duty. We have been each of us examined as to his will; we have invoked the Holy Ghost and gone through all the customary rites; we have all in common turned our eyes to the illustrious lord, the King of Germany and Sicily, the Duke of Suabia, as being worthy of the honour. Though young in years, he is old in character; though his person is not full grown, his mind has been by Nature wonderfully endowed; he exceeds the common measure of his equals; he is blest with virtues before his day, as becomes one of the true blood of that august stock, the Cæsars of Germany, who have been unsparing of their treasures and persons, in order to increase the honour and might of the Empire and the happiness of their loyal subjects."

So ran the manifesto of the Imperial Electors. No time was lost in carrying it into effect. A deputy was

sent to the Ghibelline towns of Italy to prepare them for the coming of their new Lord. Anselm von Justingen journeyed to Rome and gained the assent of the Pope and the citizens to Frederick's elevation. He then made his way to Sicily and the Court of Palermo. There he spoke the message of the Electors and invited Frederick to leave his Kingdom of Sicily and assume the dignity and crown of his Imperial forefathers.

Chapter III

THE ADVENTURE AND THE GOAL

WHAT youth of gallant spirit and royal ambitions could turn a deaf ear to the invitation which was laid before Frederick at his court of Palermo? Here were high adventure and romantic effort, perilous journeyings and a great prize for goal. The soft arms of his wife, who pleaded with him not to leave her and her babe for so dangerous a quest, the discouragement of the Sicilian nobles who had no love for Germany and no desire to see their Kingdom become a mere appanage of the German Crown, were powerless to combat the allurements of the new enterprise. High destiny called Frederick to the throne of the Cæsars, and with a stout heart but a scanty following he started on his journey northwards in the March of 1212.

It was natural and seemly that the young King should seize the opportunity offered by his northward voyage to proceed to Rome and there pay his respects to his guardian, the Pope. Accordingly he sailed from Palermo to Ostia, stopping only once on the journey at Gaeta, and made his way up the Tiber to Rome. The meeting which followed between Frederick and Innocent seemed of happy augury for the future peace of Christendom.

The youthful monarch was complaisant and respectful, the venerable Pontiff was benevolent and affectionate. Frederick placed his hands between those of Innocent in token of vassalage and acceded to various claims to lands in Sicily which were put forward by the Pope. In return he was supplied with a store of money to help him in his wanderings. There seemed no trace of that enmity which had so long raged between between Popes and Hohenstaufens, and the interests of the two appeared to be identical. The young adventurer was eager to secure the power that his fathers had held before him, and Innocent was fondly anticipating the accession of an Emperor who should overthrow the disobedient Otho and himself become the grateful and dutiful son of Mother Church.

After a few weeks' sojourn in Rome, Frederick continued on his way. The path now was beset with perils. Northern Italy was sown thickly with Guelfic towns, who were the partisans of Otho, and his landward passage across the Arno was barred by the powerful city of Pisa. Fortunately, however, Genoa was sure to embrace the cause with which Pisa was at strife, and four Genoese galleys were sent to convey Frederick to their city, which was the northernmost point of his journey which he could reach by sea. The Pisans sent out galleys in their turn to rout their Genoese enemies and capture the Emperor-elect, but the convoy safely eluded them and reached Genoa on the 1st of May.

Here he was entertained for more than two months, while his partisans in Lombardy were endeavouring to

ensure him a safe passage into Germany. It was impossible for him to proceed directly across the Alps by the most direct road. Milan, most implacable enemy of the Hohenstaufens, lay in that route, and several other hostile cities. He must march by devious ways, therefore, proceeding from one friendly town to another, and giving his enemies as wide a berth as possible. He accordingly set out from Genoa, accompanied by the Marquis of Montferrat and the Marquis of Este, two Lombard nobles who had joined him there, and made for Pavia. A royal reception was accorded him in this city and he rode in triumphal procession through its streets with a canopy borne above his head. Cremona was his next objective but the path there was a perilous one; it lay between Milan and Piacenza, both bitterly hostile to the Hohenstaufen race. He was compelled to go stealthily by night, escorted half the way by an escort of Pavians and then handed over to a body of Cremonese soldiers. He escaped death or capture by less than an hour, for before he had left his Pavian friends two miles behind, they were attacked by a strong force of Milanese and completely routed. He gained Cremona in safety and was received with every evidence of friendship. He was then passed on to Mantua and escorted from there to Verona. The Veronese citizens conducted him northwards as far as the borders of Bavaria and then left him to proceed on his journey with the little handful of followers that now remained with him.

He had accomplished the passage of Italy without mishap and was now on the threshold of Germany. Here

there was Otho to be reckoned with, for the excommunicated Emperor had hurried back into Germany when he heard of Frederick's election, and his remaining supporters had rallied round him. Frederick advanced into Bavaria as far as Trient and then received alarming news of Otho's proximity. It was impossible for him to advance further in that direction, and equally impossible to a youth of Frederick's mettle to slink back into Italy. He chose the only remaining alternative, turned sharply aside to the West and commenced an arduous march through the almost untrodden passes of the Alps. Fortunately it was late summer and the hardships of cold were not so overwhelming as they might have been; but it was a perilous enough venture across the trackless Alpine snows, and it must have been with a glad heart that he reached Coire, in his ancestral Duchy of Suabia. He was there joined by two high dignitaries of the neighbourhood, the Bishop of Coire and the Abbot of St. Gall, and his slender retinue was reinforced by a band of sixty knights.

The courage and resolution he had so far displayed were again exercised in the next move. The mighty city of Constance lay to his north, and its Bishop was undecided whether to support the Hohenstaufen or the Guelf. News was brought to Frederick that Otho was making hot haste towards the city, hoping by arriving first to decide the wavering Bishop in his favour and arrest the progress of his rival. Had he succeeded, the way north would have been closed to Frederick, and with his handful of followers he would have been driven back

into Italy by Otho's forces. The young King of Sicily, however, had no mind to see his venture close so disastrously. Immediately the news reached him of Otho's intention he made a dash for Constance. Otho's lackeys had already arrived and been admitted, but their master was three leagues behind. Frederick thundered at the gates and appealed to the ancient loyalty of Constance to the house of Suabia. The Abbot of St. Gall seconded his persuasions, and at length, after much parleying and hesitation, the Bishop decided to espouse the cause of the grandson of Barbarossa. Otho arrived some three hours afterwards with a force of three hundred knights to find the gates closed in his face and his rival safely lodged within the city's walls.

This rapid move won Frederick the Empire. Otho, seeing in the Hohenstaufen success at Constance a more serious reverse to his own cause than is easily apparent, disbanded his army and retreated into the North. Frederick's way was henceforth no longer a perilous adventure but a triumphal progress. He marched to Basle and was joined there by several princes and nobles, some eager to offer their services, many eager to sell them. From Basle he advanced northwards to the Hohenstaufen stronghold of Hagenau, which had fallen into the hands of Otho's partisans, and quickly reduced it to surrender. All who flocked to his support or had taken a hand in his election received lavish rewards. The King of Bohemia, the Archbishop of Mayence, the Bishop of Metz and Spires, the Bishop of Worms, and many lesser supporters obtained welcome grants and gifts.

He now proceeded to strengthen his position by a foreign alliance, which might be of great service should Otho prove a more formidable enemy than was anticipated by the Hohenstaufen party. He accordingly marched to Vaucouleurs, on the French boundary, and there held a conference with the eldest son of Philip Augustus. The outcome of the meeting was that Frederick promised to make no peace with Otho or his supporter, John of England, without the consent of Philip. The French monarch, in return, engaged to aid Frederick if such aid should become necessary, and in earnest of his good will presented the young Emperor-elect with the princely sum of 20,000 marks. With an equally royal munificence, Frederick ordered the sum to be distributed among the Princes of the Empire and thereby earned loud praises for his generosity. His next move was to Mayence, where he held his first Diet and received the homage of as many of the Princes as were present.

The end of this year, whose beginning had witnessed the departure of the Boy of Sicily on his dangerous venture, now saw the consummation of his hopes and the prize of his daring. On December 5th, 1212, a great assembly gathered at Frankfort. The spiritual and temporal Electors of Germany, the envoys of the King of France, the Papal Legate, and a band of five thousand knights, with one voice acclaimed Frederick as their King and Emperor.[1] He was conducted to the old

[1] Actually his title was only that of "Emperor-elect," until his final coronation at Rome.

cathedral and there crowned by the Archbishop of Mayence. From the position of a petty king he was now elevated, at the age of eighteen years, to that of the first monarch of the world, the successor of Charlemagne and the Cæsars, the temporal head of Christ's kingdom on earth.

The claim implied by the last title was, it is true, not one that could be practically carried into effect. It was a claim that was suffered because it was never actively asserted. Actually the position of the Emperor, in relation to the other kings of Europe, was that of "*primus inter pares*"; he was the senior monarch of Christendom, and not the overlord of all other monarchs. Nevertheless, that there was such a theoretical supremacy and that it was generally recognised, is demonstrated by the words of the English chronicler, Roger de Wendover, who speaks of Frederick as "the Emperor, who was, as it were, the lord and governor of the whole world." In any case it was a proud enough position to be held by a youth who, in the early days of his infancy, had been dependent for his existence upon the charity of the burghers of Palermo.

The territories over which he was now the suzerain were wider in extent than the total areas of the kingdoms of England, Scotland, France and Christian Spain. The lands of the Empire comprised the whole of modern Germany, Austria and Holland, the greater part of Belgium, a portion of France extending westwards as far as the Rhone, which was known as the Kingdom of Arles, and the northern half of Italy. The kings of Poland and

Hungary were tributary monarchs. The island of Sicily and the southern half of Italy were Frederick's by hereditary right. Sardinia, Cyprus and the kingdom of Jerusalem were added during his reign. The title of Emperor was, therefore, no empty one at this time, though Frederick was the last to enjoy an effective control over the wide territories that were attached to the Imperial crown.

Frederick spent the next two years, 1213 and 1214, in travelling through his dominions and subduing the remaining partisans of his deposed rival, Otho. At his side were nearly all the great magnates of Germany—Dukes, Prelates, Counts, Margraves and Landgraves. He proved himself most grateful to his supporters and continued to be lavish with his favours. As yet he showed no signs of disappointing the Pope's conception of him as a dutiful son of Mother Church. In July, 1213, he issued an instrument which must have given considerable satisfaction to Innocent. He acknowledged the services which Rome had rendered him, and he surrendered various rights which the Crown had long exercised over the Church in Sicily. He gave up Ancona, Spoleto, Ravenna and other territories in Central Italy to enlarge the Patrimony of St. Peter. He ceded certain lands in Tuscany, the estates of the Countess Matilda, which had long been a cause of dispute between Popes and Emperors. Lastly, he took the oath of obedience to Rome in the presence of the German Princes.

He then turned his attention to Otho, who, from his ancestral duchy of Saxony, had been ravaging the neigh-

bouring province of Thuringia. Frederick led an army into Saxony and drove Otho into his fortress of Brunswick. He then retired to Spiers and kept Christmas in state. The ruin of Otho was accelerated by his own rashness. Realising that alone he could not withstand the rising power of the young Emperor, he hoped to secure the active support of John of England by aiding that monarch in an attack upon Philip Augustus, Frederick's ally. He advanced into France and met the forces of John and the Count of Flanders. Philip summoned the chivalry of France to his side and marched against the invaders. There followed the memorable battle of Bouvines, which not only resulted in England's loss of Normandy, but completed the overthrow of the Guelf's hopes. He retired again into Saxony and occasionally led predatory attacks into the neighbouring provinces. Frederick, however, having crushed the Guelf party in other parts of Germany, felt secure enough to ignore Otho, and he was allowed to live out his days in his own territories, comforting his soul with a semblance of the Imperial dignity he had lost and surrounded by a little Court who still hailed him as Emperor. He died in the year 1218, and was buried in his purple robes.

Frederick's triumph was completed in 1215 by the surrender of Aix-la-Chapelle, the favoured city of Charlemagne, which had clung to Otho's cause as long as there was any prospect of his success. On the 24th of July his Coronation was repeated in the royal city. He was anointed with holy oil and placed on the throne of Charle-

magne. After a religious ceremony he was invested with the royal insignia and the silver crown of Germany was set on his head. The multitude of dignitaries that filled the church acclaimed his Coronation with a thrice-repeated cry of assent. He then made a rash vow which was to involve him in many troubles in later years. Moved by an eloquent sermon exhorting all the faithful to undertake another Crusade, and influenced no doubt by an emotion of gratitude for his success which the ceremony of his crowning had evoked, he took the Cross and swore to lead an army into the Holy Land.

Thirteen years were to elapse before he fulfilled this solemn engagement, but there is no reason to doubt the sincerity in which he contracted it. It was taken, however, by a young man of twenty, under the influence of a mental exaltation, and each year as it went by brought fresh tasks to be performed, which must take precedence of this chivalrous enterprise. He had to restore peace and order in Germany, to secure and confirm the loyalty of his new subjects, and to ensure the succession of his son to the dignities which death might wrest from himself when he should embark upon this perilous war against the Infidel. After Germany there was Italy to demand his attention. The royal power must be made of more effect in turbulent Lombardy, and his Kingdom of Sicily and Naples must be restored to the peace and good governance of which it had known so little since the Emperor Henry VI first led his German warriors into the South. All these matters, the duties of his kingship, must be ordered before a Crusade could be undertaken,

or else anarchy would inevitably raise its head as soon as he had turned his back upon his dominions and taken ship for the East.

The Popes, however, in their enthusiasm for the Crusades, which redounded so greatly to their influence and prestige, were not likely to appreciate the reasons for Frederick's long postponement of the fulfilment of his vow. It was fortunate for the Emperor, in this matter of the Crusade as in others, that the stern and imperious Pope Innocent died in the following year. His successor, Honorius III, was a man of comparatively gentle and tolerant nature, qualities which rendered him ill-fitted to guide the bark of St. Peter along its ambitious course. The successful mediæval Pope was a creature of sterile heart and petrified humanity, expediency his only guide, the aggrandisement of the Papal power his single purpose. Honorius was too mild of disposition, too chary of harsh measures, and Frederick was thus allowed a grace of eleven years wherein to develop his power before another militant Pontiff arose to lay jealous hands upon the Imperial edifice which he had restored.

Even Honorius, however, was not minded to let the prolonged delays of the laggard Crusader pass unrebuked. Frederick was willing enough to assist him in spurring the barons and knights of Germany into activity, but postponed his own departure year after year. "Youth, power, fame, your vow, the example of your ancestors, summon you to fulfil your glorious enterprise," wrote Honorius in 1220. "That which your illustrious grandfather, Frederick I, undertook with all his puissance, it is

your mission to bring to a glorious end. Three times have I consented to delay. I will even prolong the term to the 1st of May." The 1st of May passed, however, and no wrathful maledictions fell upon Frederick's head. The following November saw him at Rome in perfect amity with the Pope.

Meanwhile Frederick spent the period from 1215 to 1220 in fulfilling the duties of his Kingship of Germany. They were years of constant activity; he travelled from town to town, from province to province, holding Diets, bestowing charters, righting the wrong with rough but impartial justice, regulating trade and granting favours. He displayed an energy and assiduity which were all the more admirable because they were contrary to his inclinations. His was not the feverish and unnatural restlessness of a Justinian but the grim determination to leave nothing undone that ought to be done, to let nothing be sacrificed to the elegant ease and luxury which his soul loved. The fame of his beneficent rule spread far and wide. The merchant could travel in peace; the widows and the fatherless were secure from oppression; evildoers had to hide their faces before his vigorous justice.

Side by side with this common round of duty, he was occupied in maturing a scheme for the transmission of all his dignities to future members of his house. His wife Constance rejoined her lord in Germany in 1216 after a separation of four years, and brought with her their young son Henry. It was Frederick's intention to secure the election of the child, who had already been crowned

as joint ruler of Sicily, to the throne of Germany, so that on his death Henry should succeed to both Empire and Kingdom. This was not at all to the liking of the Papacy, who saw in the union of the two Powers a menace to its own supremacy and independence. Innocent, indeed, had been impelled to sanction Frederick's election to the Empire by the necessity of raising up a rival to the rebellious Otho. It was a step which he had afterwards regretted and had endeavoured to rectify by compelling Frederick to renounce his own title to the Kingdom of Sicily in favour of his son. Frederick had actually promised to carry out this renunciation as soon as he should have been crowned Emperor at Rome, when the death of Innocent and the accession of the less formidable Pope Honorius released him from the necessity of fulfilling his agreement. He then set actively to work to prepare the way for the attainment of his purpose. He associated the name of Henry with his own in all charters and grants, and gave him the title of Ruler of Burgundy and Duke of Suabia. He ingratiated his powerful subjects by generous gifts and contrived to acquaint them with the wish that he had at heart. The scheme came to fruition at the great Diet of Frankfort, which assembled in April, 1220. The Princes of the Empire, while declaring their objection to the union of the Empire and the Kingdom of Sicily, proceeded to accomplish that union by electing the young Henry as the future King of Germany.

This was a great triumph for Frederick, who could now anticipate the undisputed succession of his son Henry to

the dual sovereignty of Empire and Kingdom. It was a triumph, however, that was not gained without cost. It needed something more than his great popularity to induce the Electors to grant what he so much desired. Whether the price had been agreed upon beforehand, or whether it was a spontaneous act of gratitude, we do not know; but after the election of his son Henry, Frederick granted a charter of liberties to the Princes and Prelates of the Empire. The disruptive tendencies of this charter have been considerably exaggerated by historians. It merely confirmed the Princes in the enjoyment of certain privileges, such as the right of coinage and tollage, which they had long claimed but which such powerful sovereigns as Barbarossa had not allowed them to practise. It is true that such privileges were derogatory to the royal authority; but the Princes had become so independent and despotic during the civil war which followed on the death of Henry VI, that Frederick had not the power to compel them to return to the subjection of Barbarossa's rule. The grant of this charter of liberties was, therefore, little more than a graceful concession of certain rights which had already become established by practice. In return he obtained not only the suffrages of the Princes for his son but also an increased popularity and devotion for himself. Frederick has frequently been saddled with the responsibility for the disruption of the German kingdom into a number of sovereign principalities, and the fatal weakening of the Imperial authority. In reality this disruption was not due to Frederick's charter, but to the civil wars which preceded his acces-

sion and the long confusion that ensued on his death. It must also be regarded as the triumph of the policy of the Popes.

The election of the young Henry to the German throne without the consent of the Papacy was an affront and a menace which aroused the wrath of even the gentle Honorius. Frederick hastened to soothe the ruffled feelings of the Pontiff by an explanation whose sincerity we cannot entirely approve. He declared that the election of his son was the spontaneous action of the Electors, taken in his absence and without his knowledge. The Electors had realised, from a quarrel which had broken out between two of their number, the absolute necessity of a king to maintain order during Frederick's absence in his other dominions or in the Holy Land. He had no intention, he assured Honorius, of uniting the Kingdom with the Empire. "Even if the Church had no right over the Kingdom of Apulia and Sicily," he wrote, "I would freely grant that Kingdom to the Pope rather than attach it to the Empire, should I die without lawful heirs." Honorius was reluctant to offend the Emperor because of his anxiety to see the latter organise a Crusade, and consequently he accepted Frederick's explanation with the best grace he could.

The young Emperor-elect had by this time restored order throughout Germany and established his authority as firmly as he could hope: he trusted to the personal popularity he had secured to maintain the Princes in their loyalty. He now resolved to turn his attention to his Italian dominions and also to receive the final confirma-

tion of his Imperial Office by his Coronation at the hands of the Pope in the city of the Cæsars. He had already sent an ambassador to the Roman Senate and received the following reply, written by the Senator Parenzio in the name of the whole Roman people :—

"The letter sent to us by your Serenity, when read in the Capitol, rejoiced the hearts of us all. Your worthy ambassador, the Abbot of Fulda, has told us how you are disposed to cherish the Roman Senate and people; we beseech the Most High to continue this disposition in you, when you are raised to the Empire. We are all longing for that happy day when we shall hail your Coronation. You warn us to obey the Pope and to set an example of devotion to the Christian world. We are resolved to bind ourselves to the Roman Church, which has been founded in the city, not by men, but by Jesus Christ Himself: it is our special mother and we are its special bulwark against foes. We will take care that peace be kept at your Coronation."

Honorius himself, in spite of the displeasure which Frederick had incurred through his postponement of the Crusade and the election of his son Henry, was quite ready to lay aside his grievances and receive the Emperor-elect with all due honour. He wrote to the German Princes commanding them to respect the royal authority during Frederick's absence, and he expressed the gratification that it would afford him to welcome the Emperor and Empress to Rome. Frederick, therefore, after having

held a final Court at Augsburg and entrusted his son, who was to stay behind to represent him, into worthy hands, turned his back on Germany in the August of 1220. He was not to return for the space of fifteen years.

Chapter IV

KING AND EMPEROR

AT the age of eighteen the Boy of Sicily had crossed Northern Italy, stealing furtively by night from town to town with his handful of followers, dependent upon friendly cities for protection and escort, braving constant perils from men and the hardships of the Alpine snows. He returned at the age of twenty-six in royal state, the most powerful and popular sovereign of Christendom, with many of the mightiest Prelates and Princes of Germany in his train. Among them were the Archbishops of Mentz and Ravenna, the Patriarch of Aquileia, the Bishops of Metz, Passau, Trent, Brixen and Augsburg, the Duke of Bavaria, the Count Palatine, the Margrave of Hohenburg and the Duke of Spoleto. Ambassadors from the great cities of Italy flocked to his camps. From Apulia came the Counts of Celano, St. Severino and Aquila ; Padua, Verona, Venice, Genoa, Como, Pisa and Faenza sent their deputies to gain his favour, or to follow him to his Coronation at Rome. Milan, of course, held sullenly aloof from any sign of welcome to the head of the detested Hohenstaufen race.

The eight years of Frederick's absence in Germany had been spent by the cities of Northern Italy in abusing

their liberty in their customary manner. City warred against city, faction against faction. Milan and Parma had turned their rancour against the Church and had expelled the Prelates and seized their goods. Frederick had not a strong enough force with him to commence a general chastisement of the unruly towns, and he was anxious to reach Rome. He accordingly passed on his way southward, adjudicating such differences as were brought before him and remedying the wrongs of the Church wherever he encountered them. To certain cities he showed especial favour. Genoa, which had helped him eight years before with her galleys and had entertained him for two months, received an extension of territory and a charter of privileges, but was not altogether contented with such liberality. Pisa, on the other hand, which had displayed enmity against him in his former adventure, received grants which attached her loyally to Frederick's cause throughout his life.

In November of the year 1220 the young Hohenstaufen arrived at Rome, and on the 22nd of that month he was crowned Emperor in the ancient Basilica of St. Peter, amid the universal acclamations of his German and Sicilian followers, the Italian deputies, and the populace of Rome. The Popes were accustomed to exact certain marks of humility at the Coronation of an Emperor, and we can be sure that Frederick was not released from these ceremonies. He kissed the feet of the Pope and presented his shaven chin to receive a return of the salutation; he underwent a catechism in his religious beliefs: he held the stirrup of the

Pontiff and rode behind him in procession through the city; he sat at the Pope's right hand during the Coronation banquet. The religious ceremony in the Cathedral must have been singularly impressive. Surrounded by a glittering company of Princes and Prelates and nobles, in their gorgeous robes or burnished armour, himself clad in priestly white, Frederick received from the hands of the Vicar of Christ the insignia of the Holy Roman Empire. The Cross, the Sword, the Sceptre, the Lance, the Golden Apple surmounted by a cross, were handed to him one by one; the gem-encrusted golden Diadem was placed upon his head and then upon the head of his Empress, Constance. High Mass was then performed and, while the lighted candles were quenched and the altar plunged in gloom, the curse of God was pronounced upon all heretics. Frederick then took the Cross from the hands of the Cardinal Ugolino, who was in a few years to become Pope Gregory IX, and vowed to sail to the Holy Land in the following August.

After the Coronation the Pope received further evidence of the Emperor's gratitude and goodwill. Frederick confirmed the grant of those territories which he had ceded to Innocent III in 1213 and ordered the cities of the various provinces to transfer their allegiance from himself to the Pope. He then issued nine Edicts in favour of the Church and for the suppression of heresy, which was at that time very prevalent, especially in Northern Italy. All laws, customs and usages employed by cities, communities or rulers, which

were derogatory to the liberties of ecclesiastics or in discord with the laws of the Church and the Empire, were annulled. The continued practice of such usages was to be punished by heavy fines; persistent offenders were to be deprived of all their possessions. Churches and churchmen were to be immune from taxation, and amenable in matters of jurisdiction only to their own courts. All heretics were placed under the ban of the Empire and pronounced incapable of holding honours or offices: their goods were confiscated, their abettors prosecuted and their persons sentenced to various pains and penalties; "for," runs the decree, "outrages against the Lord of Heaven are more heinous than those against a temporal lord." Other laws of a more general character were included in the Edicts, prohibiting the plunder of wrecks and protecting pilgrims and the cultivators of the soil.

Frederick stayed for some weeks in the neighbourhood of Rome and transacted a vast amount of business, sending forth promulgations to every part of Germany and Italy and appointing vicars to various portions of his dominions. He departed for his southern Kingdom early in December. His meeting with Honorius had passed without any unpleasant references to the separation of the Empire and the Kingdom or to the election of the young Henry. Pope and Emperor, in spite of minor differences, parted on excellent terms. "We do not think," wrote Honorius, "that ever Pope of Rome loved Emperor more heartily than we love you, as we hope to prove to you, with God's help, hereafter."

Frederick found his Kingdom of Sicily in a sad state of confusion. During his minority he had been powerless to exert his authority over the mainland, though he had reduced the island to some degree of order. Innocent III, as feudal lord of the realm, had, it is true, made efforts to subjugate Apulia, but where he had succeeded the result had not been to Frederick's advantage. The Pope had appointed his own creatures to whatever territories he had subdued, and these paid little respect to the royal authority. Matters had not improved greatly during the young King's absence in Germany. The nobles, whether descendants of the old Norman invaders, or German adventurers who had obtained grants from Frederick's father, or creatures of the Papacy, had rent the land with their private wars, built unlicensed castles and seized fresh estates for themselves. The lower classes suffered from the quarrels and oppression of their superiors, and looked eagerly forward to the coming of one who, if report spoke truly, was likely to restore to them the blessings of peace.

Certainly the Emperor was not minded to suffer in his hereditary Kingdom the state of things that he was compelled to accept in Germany. The independence and exorbitant power of the great German nobles, which had become too firmly established for him to overthrow and which must have fretted his proud spirit grievously, was probably one of the reasons that induced him to adopt his southern Kingdom as his chosen abode. Here he might hope to enjoy an absolute and untram-

melled authority, and he immediately set to work to bring about this desirable end. The task was to prove a longer one than he anticipated.

The first instrument for the subjugation of the nobles was the foundation of a new tribunal in the city of Capua, called the Capuan Court. A general inquisition, similar to the later statute 'Quo Warranto' of our English King Edward I, was established into the titles by which nobles, churchmen and corporations held their lands and privileges. The death of Frederick's maternal grandfather, King William the Good, was fixed as the latest date previous to which titles were recognised as unquestionably valid. All charters granted since that date were open to the suspicion of having been bestowed either by Tancred the Usurper, by the various German adventurers who had struggled for the regency of the Kingdom during Frederick's childhood, by Otho during his invasion, or by Innocent III; they were consequently subjected to a rigid examination. All nobles who did not send in their charters to the Court for revision before a certain date were held to have forfeited their honours. The result of the inquisition was that many nobles and ecclesiastics were deprived of all or a portion of their illegally acquired territories. Many, fearing chastisement for their past misdeeds, fled from this unpleasantly energetic monarch to Rome, where, as Frederick complained, they were too warmly welcomed by the Pope. A system of taxation was also commenced, from which the clergy were not immune. Frederick also commenced to interfere in elections to

vacant bishoprics and to banish or imprison refractory Prelates.

Such high-handed conduct naturally called forth an indignant protest from Honorius, who reminded the Emperor of the compact made by his mother Constance with Innocent. But Frederick was determined to maintain the royal authority and to rescue it from the decrepitude into which it had fallen. He replied that he was not bound by a treaty which had been entered into by a woman. He complained that Innocent had made havoc with the royal power during his minority, and he recalled the old privileges of the Sicilian Kings. "How long," he haughtily enquired, "will the Pope abuse my patience? What bound will he set to his ambition? He begins to despise the majesty of the Emperor. I would rather lay down the Crown than lessen my authority."

The work commenced at Capua continued for seven and a half years. Slowly but surely Frederick gathered the scattered fragments of the royal power into his hands and welded them into despotism. The lawless nobles of Apulia were controlled with a vigorous severity, and the great ecclesiastics were chastised as impartially as their lay brethren. The Emperor was determined to restore order throughout his Kingdom, and such order could not be enforced if the King's only means of securing redress for ecclesiastical turbulence was a complaint to the biased tribunal of St. Peter. We can hardly blame him for refusing to recognise a treaty which emasculated the royal authority, and which had

been wrung from his distressed and friendless mother by a hard and unscrupulous Pope. "No man," runs the preamble of a charter, "dares now to put his trust in iniquity; we will introduce justice into all things subject to us." The justice was necessarily of a harsh and somewhat barbarous kind, and was enforced against powerful offenders with the aid of the sword. Criminals were broken on the wheel or mutilated. There was no room for sentimental humanitarianism in Mediæval Italy.

The licence of the nobles was not the only enemy with which Frederick had to contend. The Saracens had established themselves in Sicily soon after the death of Charlemagne and had retained their hold of the western mountains in spite of the continued efforts of the Norman kings to dislodge them. They had always been a disturbing element in the Island: they continually ravaged the adjacent territories, practised piracy and were always ready to aid a Christian rebel against the reigning monarch. Frederick took the field in person against them in 1222, and inflicted a heavy defeat upon their forces. Their Emir was hanged on a gibbet at Palermo, and the wild tribes were forced to leave their mountain fastnesses and dwell in the plains.

A further measure was executed which reveals the bold quality of his statesmanship, and recalls the measures of the Tyrants of Grecian History. Twenty thousand of their ablest fighting men, henceforth to become his own soldiers, were transported to the mainland and settled at Lucera, in the broad plains of Apulia. The

city was emptied of its Christian inhabitants and repeopled with Infidels : the Cathedral was turned into a Mosque : and a mighty castle, whose ruins still endure, was built to overawe the new colony.

Such a daring innovation, such a vast undertaking conceived and executed in so lordly a manner, and so lofty a disregard of the religious prejudices of the day, called forth a gasp of astonishment throughout Europe and a shiver of pious horror from the ecclesiastics. A shocked remonstrance from the Pope was met by a most plausible argument. We can imagine a sly smile on Frederick's lips as he dictated the excuse to his secretaries. The Emperor, he said, was compelled to wage many wars in which numbers of his soldiers must die. It were surely better that Moslems, whose souls and bodies were of less consequence than those of Christians, should be employed in these wars than that Christian blood should be shed. The specious explanation was accepted by Honorius.

The wisdom of the measure was undoubted. In Sicily the Saracens were a constant menace to the royal authority : isolated in Apulia, they became the Emperor's loyal warriors, who would serve him against all enemies and were not affected by the Papal curses and maledictions which Frederick later incurred. The remnant of the Infidels remaining in the Island, thus weakened in their fighting strength and overawed by such masterful measures, gradually resigned themselves to good behaviour. One or two outbreaks afterwards occurred, but by the year 1226 the taming process was complete.

The ordering of his disturbed Kingdom and the constant journeyings and expeditions it entailed left Frederick little time for rest and recreation. Nevertheless he was able to snatch brief periods of leisure, when he would hunt the wild boar or pass his days in luxurious idleness and cultured ease. His court was attended by many great nobles from Germany, Northern Italy and his Southern Kingdom, and many distinguished Crusaders would break their homeward voyage and pay their respects to the Emperor, who was always ready to entertain them with lavish hospitality.

An amusing legend throws some light on the character of the court, which was evidently not remarkable for puritanical sobriety of morals. The famous St. Francis came to Bari, where Frederick was sojourning, and preached a denunciatory sermon against the vices of the Emperor and his court: the sin of licentiousness was especially condemned. Frederick received the reproof with perfect good humour, but determined to satisfy himself with regard to the reputed asceticism of the saint. Francis was therefore invited to supper and afterwards led to a sleeping chamber wherein to pass the night. At midnight a lady of light virtue but remarkable charms was introduced into his rooms, and commenced to exercise all the blandishments of her profession to induce him to descend from his pedestal of sanctity. The contest was unequal, however, for the friar was aided by supernatural powers and put the temptress to flight with a fiery shield. Frederick, who, with his courtiers, had witnessed the scene through convenient chinks in

the wall, was thoroughly convinced by this proof, apologised to Francis for his scepticism and the practical joke it had inspired, and spent some hours in spiritual discussion with his saintly guest.

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Meanwhile, what of the Crusade during these years, and of the vow that Frederick had taken at his Coronation to lead an army into the Holy Land in the following August? The appointed day passed by and year after year succeeded, but still he lingered in his Kingdom, determined to bring his work there to some measure of completion before he would turn his eyes to the East. Honorius chafed under the delay, entreated and threatened in turn; but death overtook him before he could see the attainment of his cherished desire.

Immediately on his arrival in Apulia, Frederick realised that it was impossible, with his Kingdom in such a state of disorder, to fulfil the promise made at his Coronation. "O that you would consider," wrote Honorius, "how wistfully the Christian host awaits you in the East, believing that you will postpone all to Jerusalem, especially since the Lord hath granted you such means for the enterprise." The Emperor replied that those means were not so plentiful as the Pope supposed; that his treasury was so depleted by the expenses of his Coronation and by the constant supply of men he was sending to the East, that it was not possible to set out himself in August. He asked for a further respite until the March of the year 1222. Meanwhile

he sent a fleet of forty galleys to aid the Christian host, which had already accomplished the capture of Damietta.

The fleet tarried on the way and arrived too late. Urged on by Cardinal Pelagius, the Papal Legate, the Crusaders had advanced into Egypt with the intention of besieging Cairo. Their army, consisting of 6000 knights and 40,000 infantry, and headed by King John of Jerusalem and the Grand Masters of the militant orders, was lured into the pursuit of the Sultan's forces which had encamped on the banks of the Nile. Had they awaited the arrival of Frederick's galleys, which could have supported them on the river, they might at least have averted disaster. But without adequate supplies or an open way of communication by water, they were gradually enmeshed and isolated by the Sultan's horsemen and compelled to submit to an ignominious treaty. Damietta, which had engaged the efforts of the Christians for an entire year before it surrendered and before whose walls so much Christian blood had been shed, was now yielded back to the Infidels. The Sultan was gracious enough to grant his humiliated enemies a sop to their wounded self-esteem in the shape of the restitution of the true Cross. A truce was agreed upon which should endure for eight years, unless a crowned head should come from Europe to lead the Christian host.

The surrender of Damietta caused a profound gloom throughout Europe and plunged Honorius in grief. Although the impatience of the Legate Pelagius was responsible for the disaster, the Pope vented his indignation upon the Emperor. "For five years," he wrote,

" men have been expecting your Crusade; they now throw the whole blame of the disasters in Egypt on the Pope, and not without reason. We have been too easy in sanctioning your delays. Owing to the solemn vow made by you at your Coronation, and owing to your letters to the Crusaders announcing your speedy arrival, they rejected the proffer of Jerusalem. We shall spare you no longer if you still neglect your duty; we shall excommunicate you in the face of the Christian world. Take heed, then, like a wise man and a Catholic Prince!"

In the April of the next year Pope and Emperor met at Veroli. They agreed to proclaim a great assembly at Verona in November, at which all the great Princes and Prelates of the Empire should attend and debate with the temporal and spiritual heads of Christendom upon the ways and means for a united effort to redeem the loss of Damietta. November came and found the Pope stricken with illness and the Emperor immersed in Sicilian affairs, and the assembly was postponed. Another meeting between Honorius and Frederick took place in March, 1223, at Ferentino, at which the veteran Crusader, King John of Jerusalem, the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Grand Master of the Knights Templars were present. Here the Emperor explained the various causes which had hindered him from fulfilling his vow, and declared that the state of his Kingdom was still too disturbed to allow him to absent himself or even to despatch a sufficient force to the Holy Land. Supported by King John, he urged a further delay of two years, which should be spent in the endeavour to arouse

Europe to a supreme effort. Honorius was reasonable enough to accept the proposition and once again the Crusade was postponed. At the same time Frederick burdened himself with a more intimately personal interest in the matter. His wife, Constance, had died in the previous year, and he now betrothed himself to Yolande, the young daughter of John. Yolande was the rightful heiress, through her mother, of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and Frederick might thus expect to add yet another crown to his sovereignty.

The two years of delay passed away and left the prospects of the Crusade no brighter than before. The days of the old enthusiasm were gone. England, Germany, France and Spain could not be roused to ardour even by the personal exhortations of King John. Northern Italy was coldly indifferent to the expostulations of Cardinal Ugolino. Frederick himself was still busy with the ordering of his Kingdom. Once again the disappointed Pope had to bow to the force of circumstances, and an agreement was framed at San Germano by which the Crusade was deferred for two years longer, until the August of 1227. The Emperor bound himself by severe penalties to start for the East by that date and to maintain a thousand knights in the Holy Land for two years. As a guarantee for the fulfilment of this pledge he undertook to pay 100,000 ounces of gold in instalments to King John and the Patriarch, which amount was to be forfeited to the Pope if he failed to embark on the enterprise. Any breach of the treaty was to be followed by his immediate excommunication.

Honorius might well think that at last he had bound the Emperor hard and fast.

Soon after the meeting at San Germano, the Emperor took unto himself a second wife. As a boy of fourteen he had wedded a woman of twenty-four ; now as a man of thirty he espoused a bride of fifteen. If at first sight the marriage of the little Yolande at such a tender age seems revolting to our English notions, it must be remembered that womanhood ripens quickly in the South, and that fifteen is regarded as a perfectly marriageable age in modern Italy. The direct result of the wedding was a violent quarrel between Frederick and the bride's father. King John asserted that he had consented to the match under the impression that he would be allowed to retain the crown of Jerusalem,—which he wore only by virtue of his marriage with Yolande's mother, the Queen of Jerusalem,—during the remainder of his life. The Emperor, however, insisted that, as the husband of Yolande, the Crown and all its rights legally reverted to him. The old warrior was forced to yield, and departed from the Emperor's court in high wrath, shorn of his royalty.

Two stories were told to account further for the bitter hostility John hereafter displayed, but both were obviously concocted by Frederick's unscrupulous enemies. The first relates that John had in his following his nephew Walter, who, through his mother, was the grandson of the Usurper Tancred : this Tancred, it will be remembered, had dispossessed Frederick's mother of the Crown of Sicily, until the Emperor Henry VI had regained

his wife's inheritance. Frederick, it was asserted, looked on Walter with no friendly eye and determined to be rid of him. He invited him to a game of chess, and arranged to have him stabbed while absorbed in the game. King John heard of the plot, dragged his nephew away from the board, cursed the Emperor for the son of a butcher of Jesi, and departed with all possible speed. There is no shadow of credibility in the slander. Not only was such a dastardly assassination entirely incompatible with Frederick's character, but there was no motive for such a crime. It was not possible that the powerful Emperor, who was King of Sicily both *de facto* and *de jure*, could regard the grandson of Tancred the Usurper as a dangerous rival whose existence was a menace to his own safety.

The other story is, unfortunately, slightly more probable in one of its features. It asserts that soon after Yolande had been crowned Empress, King John found her in tears in her chamber. He enquired the cause, and she sobbed that her husband had denied her the embraces that were her due and had taken her cousin into his bed in her place. The old Crusader at once bearded Frederick in his chamber, and after speaking his mind very freely, left the Court. The Emperor was so ruffled by John's tirade that he threw Yolande into prison. The story is plausible in so far as we may be sure that Frederick, whose ideas on matrimonial fidelity were entirely Oriental, did not give to his young wife the monopoly of his embraces. At the same time, it is very unlikely that a man of his amorous character

would neglect a girlish and beautiful bride at the very outset of their matrimonial career : still less likely that he would cast the child into prison in his wrath against her father. Moreover, the fact that two years afterwards she bore him a son, and that they always appeared to be in perfect amity, shows that there was no deliberate and sustained neglect or dislike on Frederick's part.

Whatever the cause of John's enmity—and the loss of his crown is sufficient to account for it without the support of these two spurious stories—the rupture between the most powerful sovereign of Christendom and the most prominent Crusader of the day was not likely to be conducive to the success of the efforts that were being made to arouse Europe to united action. Moreover, relations between Frederick and the Pope were dangerously strained. In 1226 Honorius threatened excommunication for various offences against the Church in Sicily, which the Emperor had committed in pursuit of his policy of reducing all classes in his Kingdom to obedience. Frederick was just then starting on his expedition into Northern Italy, and he considered it advisable to calm the Pope's anger, as the Papal influence was so strong in Lombardy. He accordingly addressed a conciliatory letter to His Holiness which averted the threatened storm.

The Emperor's journey into the North was prompted by the most peaceful motives, if any matter connected with a Crusade can be termed peaceful. At any rate, he meditated no aggressive action against the Lombards. He had resolved to hold a great Diet at Cremona, as a

last preparation for the Crusade that must start in the following August (1227). He sent a circular to the Italian cities ordering them to send their warriors to Cremona, and summoned his son Henry to bring the German chivalry to the meeting. The reply of the Lombards was a long series of insults, vexations and open hostilities. Cremona, Parma, Reggio, and Modena alone sent their deputies to pay their respects to the Emperor. Bologna shut her gates against him, and with Milan stirred up Piacenza, Verona, Brescia, Faenza, Mantua and many other towns to renew the Lombard League. It had been originally formed against Barbarossa to defend the liberties of the Lombard cities: it was now renewed against his grandson in an aggressive spirit which was entirely unwarranted by Frederick's peaceful mission. King Henry, advancing southwards with his Germans to join his father, found his way barred by the impregnable walls of Verona, and he returned. A meeting between father and son at this time might have averted the unfilial conduct which Henry later displayed, and the Emperor never forgave the city that had rendered such a meeting impossible.

The proposed Diet of Cremona was rendered entirely abortive by the wanton hostility of the Lombards. The Emperor had not come prepared for a military campaign, and was not able to enforce good conduct upon the sullen cities. He had, therefore, to content himself with words. He pronounced the ban of the Empire against the Lombards, depriving them of their laws, corporations, and all the rights they had gained by

the treaty of Constance, which they had wrested from Barbarossa. The Pope, indignant at the obstacles they had placed in the way of the Crusade by preventing the Diet, empowered the Bishop of Hildesheim to support the Imperial ban with the Papal excommunication. Frederick returned to his Kingdom, compelled to retire before the menacing attitude of the League.

"God, who knows all secrets," he wrote to Honorius, "is aware that we postponed everything to His service; that we attended the Diet in the spirit of love and graciousness to all men; and that we showed hatred to none of those who had offended us and our Empire. . . . We showed ourselves merciful, and we did and bore many things which we should have neither done nor borne, had not the holiest of all causes been at stake. But instead of peace we found uproar; instead of love we found malice; and all our efforts could not tempt the Lombards from their unrighteous course. Moreover, owing to their wickedness, the late Diet had no results, although summoned on behalf of the holiest cause. How they have sinned against God, how they have damaged the honour of the Church and that of the Empire, your Holiness will easily estimate. We entrust the whole affair to you and to the Cardinals."

This amounted to a request that Honorius should act as arbitrator between Frederick and the Lombards. The Emperor was anxious for the success of the coming Crusade, and was willing to forego his revenge rather than hinder the cause. The Lombards also consented to the Papal arbitration, and in January, 1227, Honorius

pronounced his decision. The Emperor was to release his enemies from the Imperial ban, and both sides were to restore all prisoners. The Lombards were to maintain four hundred knights in Palestine for two years, and to cleanse themselves of the taint of heresy.

The date fixed for the departure of the Emperor for the East was rapidly approaching. In the August of this year he must at last redeem his long-postponed vow, or suffer the penalties in which he had himself concurred. Honorius might at last believe that he would see the fulfilment of his long-cherished desires. But the hand of death intervened, and in the March of 1227 the aged Pope was borne to the tomb. With his gentle soul there passed that precarious peace that for seventeen years had endured between the Empire and the Papacy.

Chapter V

THE FIRST EXCOMMUNICATION

THE choice of the Conclave, in its election of a successor to Honorius, fell upon the Cardinal Ugolino, who adopted the name of Gregory the Ninth. The new Pope was a man of considerable attainments. He was profoundly learned in Holy Writ, a master of the Canon Law, a most eloquent speaker, and well versed in the arts of statecraft. He had been employed by his uncle, Innocent III, and by Honorius, in many missions of great moment, and had thus acquired a considerable knowledge of worldly affairs. In his less elevated position he had earned the admiration of the Emperor. "He is a man of spotless reputation," Frederick had once declared, "renowned for piety, erudition and eloquence. He shines among the rest like a brilliant star."

All these graces had helped him to climb to the loftiest summit of an ecclesiastic's ambition. Once he had attained to the Throne of St. Peter, however, his character quickly developed aspects that had hitherto lain hidden. An intemperate violence, an ambitious desire for the aggrandisement of his office at the expense of the temporal power, a lack of scruple which did not shrink from deliberate mendacity, a ferocious intolerance

of all forms of unorthodox belief, all these combined to make him a sinister and repellent figure. He was eighty when he succeeded to Honorius, and as the years went by, the approach of extreme old age, instead of softening a heart which had been frozen by a long life of rigorous asceticism, did but accentuate the more forbidding traits of his nature, and added thereto the querulous and petulant temper of senility. Into the conflict between the Empire and the Papacy he carried an element of fierce personal hatred, a hatred that was aggravated and inflamed by his jealousy of the high renown, the popularity, the magnificent qualities and the lofty independence of his opponent.

In his conception of the superiority of the spiritual power, he reverted to the ideas of Hildebrand. All the monarchs of Christendom, the Emperor himself, should bow the knee to him in temporal submission. And thus the struggle resolved itself into a fight for pre-eminence on the one hand and for independence and equality on the other. In the conflict which burst forth soon after his accession and which, after an interval of superficial peace, raged unceasingly until the Emperor's death, and beyond, Frederick was fighting for the liberties and rights of the monarchs of Europe against the menace of priestly tyranny.

The first letter from the new Pope to the Emperor was couched in friendly terms but ended in a veiled threat. "We are willing to grant you all the indulgence we can," wrote Gregory, referring to the long-delayed Crusade; "but take heed that you do not place yourself

in a situation whence we may not be able to extricate you, with the best of will." Frederick, however, was exerting himself to the utmost to fulfil the compact of San Germano, and Gregory could find no cause for complaint in this direction. He then turned his attention to the private life of the Emperor, which was certainly open to reproof from one whose life had been spent in constant repression of fleshly lusts. "God has bestowed upon you the gift of knowledge and of perfect imagination," runs the rebuke, "and all Christendom follows you. Take heed that you do not place your intellect, which you have in common with the angels, below your senses, which you have in common with brutes and plants. Your intellect is weakened if you are the slave of your senses. If those two lights, knowledge and love, be quenched, if those conquering eagles be brought low and turned to earthly lusts, you will not be able to point the way of salvation to your followers. Far be this from you, dearest son! Follow after justice and mercy, even as Israel followed the fiery pillar and the cloudy pillar."

The Emperor seems to have received this reproof with perfect humility. He had no time for wrangles with the Pope, for August was fast approaching and in August he must sail for the East. It was evident that the means for the Crusade must be supplied almost entirely by himself. England and France were apathetic. Nor did Germany answer very readily to the call: the powerful Duke of Austria hung back at the last moment, and the Landgrave of Thuringia had to be paid a large sum before he would consent to march.

Finally, however, the German host arrived in Apulia and assembled at Brindisi, where a fleet was waiting to carry them to Acre. The time was ill-chosen. The Italian summer was at its height and the power of the sun was so great that, according to one chronicler, it melted solid metal. Numbers of the Germans, among them the Landgrave of Thuringia and the Bishops of Augsberg and Angers, succumbed to the climate. Frederick himself was in a precarious state of health, and rode to join his army at Brindisi against the emphatic advice of his physicians. He embarked with his sickly host on the appointed day in August. Before he had been three days at sea, however, the threatened illness seized him with such severity that it became evident that to pursue the voyage was to invite almost certain death.

The nobles of the Empire and of the East who surrounded him urged him to postpone the expedition. Reluctantly he followed their counsel and returned to Otranto. He despatched an embassy to Gregory to explain matters and betook himself to the baths of Pozzuoli, near Naples, to recover his strength. The Crusade was a miserable fiasco. Forty thousand men had assembled at Acre, but nearly all returned when they heard the Emperor would not arrive to lead them. Only eight hundred knights remained under the Duke of Limberg, Frederick's lieutenant.

The news that would have reduced Honorius to tears of bitter grief aroused fiercer emotions in Gregory's breast. He turned a deaf ear to Frederick's ambassadors

and refused to believe even his own messengers, who assured him of the reality of the Emperor's illness. He gathered his Cardinals and Bishops around him in the Cathedral and delivered a resounding discourse on the text: "It must needs be that offences come, but woe unto him through whom the offence cometh." He then hurled forth the sentence of excommunication: the bells clanged out in discord, the clergy dashed down their torches, while amid the ominous gloom the Vicar of Christ called down the eternal curses of God upon the head of Frederick the Emperor.

There followed another address to the assembled clergy. "The Church of Christ," spoke Gregory, "while she thinks that she is nursing up her children, is fostering in her bosom fire and serpents and basilisks, which would destroy everything by their fire, their breath and their burning. To combat these monsters, to triumph over hostile armies, to appease these restless tempests, the Holy Apostolic See reckoned in these latter times on a nurseling whom she had brought up with the tenderest care; the Church had taken the Emperor Frederick, as it were, from his mother's womb, fed him at her breast, borne him on her shoulders; she had often rescued him from those who sought his life; instructed him, educated him with care and pain to manhood; invested him with the royal dignity; and to all these blessings bestowed upon him the title of Emperor, hoping to find in him a protecting support, a staff for her old age. No sooner was he king in Germany than, of his own accord, unexhorted, unknown to the Apostolic

See, he took the Cross and made a vow to depart for the Holy Land; he even demanded that himself and all other Crusaders should be excommunicated if they did not set forth at the appointed time. At his Coronation as Emperor, we ourselves, then holding an inferior office under the most Holy Honorius, gave him the Cross and received the renewal of his vows. Three times, at Veroli, at Ferentino, and at San Germano, he alleged delays; the Church in her indulgence accepted his excuses. At San Germano he made a covenant which he swore by his soul to accomplish; if not, he incurred by his own consent the most awful excommunication. How has he fulfilled his covenant? When many thousands of pilgrims, depending on his solemn promises, were assembled in the port of Brindisi, he detained the army so long, under the burning summer heats, that a great part of the pilgrims perished. . . . At length, when the ships began to return from the Holy Land, the pilgrims embarked on board of them, on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, expecting the Emperor to join their fleet. But he, breaking all promises, bursting every bond, trampling under foot the fear of God, despising all reverence for Christ Jesus, scorning the censures of the Church, deserting the Christian army, abandoning the Holy Land to the Unbelievers, to his own disgrace and that of all Christendom, withdrew to the luxuries and wonted delights of his kingdom, seeking to palliate his offence by frivolous excuses of bodily sickness. . . . Rome mourns for Palestine, which we were hoping might be rescued from the Moslem, and which we should have

gained in exchange for Damietta, had not the Emperor's letter forbidden it; our army would not have been captured if he had sent ships to the rescue, as he had promised. . . . That we may not be esteemed as dumb dogs, who dare not bark, or fear to take vengeance upon him, the Emperor Frederick, who has caused such ruin to the people of God, we proclaim the said Emperor excommunicate; we command you to publish this our excommunication throughout the realm, and to declare that, in case of his contumacy, we shall proceed to still more awful censures. We trust, however, that he will see his own shame and return to the mercy of his mother the Church, having given ample satisfaction for all his guilt."

This address, which contained so much exaggeration and no little deliberate falsehood, and which branded the Emperor as a malingerer and a liar, was embodied in a letter and circulated among the ecclesiastical dignitaries of Europe.

Frederick received the news of his excommunication with a calmness that must have been far more exasperating to Gregory than a passionate outburst of wrath. The sentence itself he treated with lofty contempt. The clergy throughout the Kingdom were ordered to continue to perform their sacred offices, which the excommunication prohibited, and, willingly or reluctantly, they obeyed. At the same time he was careful to protect them from the violence of his indignant partisans, who would have avenged the Pope's insult on the Pope's underlings. The letter of accusation was answered by

one of exculpation and counter accusation, which was despatched to the monarchs and princes of Europe.

"We are loth to say it," ran the Imperial missive, "but our hopes have been deceived; the end of all things is at hand; love is waxing cold, not only in its branches but in its roots. The Roman Empire, the bulwark of the Faith, is being assailed by its own fathers. If an enemy were to attack us we should grasp the sword; but when the Vicar of Christ arises against us, our reverence for the blessed St. Peter causes us to pause in amazement. Let the whole earth hear the provocations we have received." These are detailed at some length and a special grievance related in the Pope's refusal to believe in Frederick's illness. "Our Apostolic Lord did not deal fairly with the ambassadors we sent him; they were ready to explain all, but he would scarcely listen to them; it is said that he consulted with each Prelate in private, and warned each not to depart from the sentence arranged beforehand, prior to the defence made by our envoys; thus the Council arrived at a conclusion without hearing what he had to bring forward. Besides this, the men of Rieti, the subjects of the Pope, on hearing of our embarkation, made an attack on our kingdom, but were beaten off. All this we desire to make known to the whole world; in spite of all we shall not desist from the service of Christ. Perhaps it has all been ordered for the best, since we shall be able to do more in Palestine next year. We ask you for help, as we mean to set forth in May. We also ask you to send envoys to us at Ravenna in Mid-Lent, when

we shall hold a Diet for the maintenance of peace in Italy."

The letter sent to Henry III of England contained timely references to recent English history. "Take warning from the past. Has not the unjust interdict of the Pope reduced the Count of Toulouse and many other princes to servitude? Did not Innocent III urge the noble Barons of England to insurrection against John, the enemy of the Church? But no sooner had the humiliated King subjected his realm, like a dastard, to the See of Rome, than, having sucked the fat of the land, he abandoned those Barons to shame, ruin and death. Such is the way of Rome; under words as smooth as oil and honey lies the rapacious blood-sucker: the Church of Rome is like a leech; she calls herself my mother and nurse, while all her acts have been those of a stepmother. The whole world pays tribute to the avarice of Rome. Her Legates travel through all lands, with full powers of ban and interdict and excommunication, not to sow the seed of the Word of God, but to extort money, to reap what they have not sown. . . . The primitive Church, founded on poverty and simplicity, brought forth numberless Saints: she rested on no foundation but that which had been laid by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Romans are now rolling in wealth; what wonder that the walls of the Church are undermined to the base and threaten utter ruin." The well-deserved censure on ecclesiastical luxury and avarice was followed by a warning that the Pope's attack on the Emperor was fraught with danger to other monarchs. "Remember

that when your neighbour's wall is on fire, your own property is at stake."

Frederick then proceeded to secure allies in the enemy's citadel. He invited to his Court the Frangipani and other patrician families of Rome, bought all their lands and houses from them at their own valuation, and then handed them back to them as feudal holdings. By this lavish transaction he bound the families to his cause as his own vassals, who owed him homage and service in return for the fiefs he had bestowed upon them. Whether the subsequent occurrence was the direct outcome of this politic generosity is unknown, but at any rate a few weeks later Gregory received convincing proof of the Emperor's popularity with the citizens of Rome. He had recently repeated the sentence of excommunication with a more emphatic denunciation of the Emperor's conduct, and was celebrating Mass in St. Peter's, when the common folk broke out into hissings and abusings, and evinced so marked a hostility that Gregory was compelled to flee from Rome and take refuge in Perugia.

Meanwhile, Frederick, undeterred by the Papal fulminations, was making ready to resume the voyage to the Holy Land which his illness had interrupted. The death of the Sultan Moadhin of Damascus, the most dreaded of the Moslem chiefs, and the subsequent dissensions that raged among his sons, seemed a favourable omen for the success of the venture. Domestic trouble was not allowed to hinder the cause. In the April of 1228 the Empress Yolande died, after giving birth to a

son, Conrad. The child-wife was buried with the honours fitting her high estate, and Frederick, now a widower for the second time at the age of thirty-three, turned from her grave to wrest the heritage she had brought to him from the hands of the Infidels.

Before his departure he held a great assembly in the open air at Barletta, and appointed Raynald of Spoleto to the vice-regency of the Kingdom. Henry, already elected as his successor to the Imperial Crown, was named as his heir to the Kingdom of Sicily. The babe Conrad, his second son, was to succeed on the event of Henry's death.

From Barletta the Emperor proceeded to Brindisi and there issued an edict withdrawing the grant of the March of Ancona which he had made to the Papacy at his Coronation. "We made our grant to the Church," he wrote to the inhabitants of the March, "without intending to give up the rights of the Empire. The Popes have abused our kindness; they have tried to withdraw our lieges from the service due to us. They have besides installed as your magistrates men who are the sons of schism and discord. We have therefore resolved to revoke our grant to the Church."

From Otranto, the final port of embarkation, he issued one more protest against the harshness of Gregory, addressed to his subjects throughout the Empire and the Kingdom. "We have sent envoys to the Pope for forgiveness even more frequently than became our dignity; we have lately sent to him the Archbishop of Magdeburg and two Judges of our Court, but they could not prevail

upon him even to name his own terms. He has allowed his subjects, the men of Rieti, to make an attack upon our Kingdom. He has made use of the money subscribed for the Crusade to raise soldiers for the purpose of harassing us. Still we are bent on the service of Christ; we are just about to set sail for Syria with a fair wind. We order you all to do your best to aid us and the cause of Palestine."

The Pope showed no signs of relenting. His final message to the departing Crusader was a peremptory order forbidding Frederick to sail while under the Church's ban. Frederick ignored the command and assembled his men. A force of five hundred knights had already been despatched some months before and great quantities of supplies. He had also been over-lavish with his grants to needy pilgrims who had besought his help on their journey to the East, and his treasury was almost exhausted. It was therefore with no great pomp that he sailed for Palestine on the 29th of June, and only a hundred knights accompanied him. "He sailed more like a pirate than an Emperor," sneered the Vicar of Christ.

Chapter VI

THE EXCOMMUNICATE CRUSADER

ALL Christendom stood amazed at the spectacle of an excommunicated Emperor leading a Crusade into the Holy Land against the express commands of the Pope. It was an affront to the Papacy such as no monarch had ever dared to offer, a blow at the infallibility of the Vicar of Christ, a direct challenge of his position as the earthly mouthpiece of God. A Crusade was so essentially a religious enterprise, so firmly identified in men's minds with the service of the Church and of the Pope as the head of the Church. Yet here was a monarch setting forth not merely unblessed but definitely forbidden : and—more cause for amazement still—a monarch who was excommunicated, who was under the awful ban of the Church, outcast from the fold of the faithful and branded with the Curse of God.

" In spite of all," Frederick had written, " we shall not desist from the service of Christ." If such a man could serve Christ, then the Papal pretensions to be the mediator between earth and Heaven were vain. The service of God, in fact, was not synonymous with the service of the Pope :| the two might even be in direct opposition. Frederick's action aimed a blow at the very

foundations of the Papal doctrine, by proclaiming to the world that the condemnations and commands of the Pope issued from the mouth of man and not from the mouth of God, and that the Emperor himself could interpret the Divine Will more truly than the successor of St. Peter. Small wonder that a flame of hatred raged in the soul of Gregory.

Meanwhile the Crusader was sailing with a fair wind for Palestine. A three weeks' voyage brought him to Cyprus, and after a stay of a month's duration, which he spent in reviving the imperial overlordship of that island, he sailed for Acre and on the 3rd of September, 1228, first set foot in the Holy Land. Here a large host of pilgrims were assembled. The Teutonic Order, the Templars and the Hospitallers, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Prelates from England and France, and a number of Germans and Lombards, all welcomed the long-expected Emperor as the saviour of Israel. It seemed probable that Frederick would have a formidable force to lead to battle against the Infidels.

In a few days, however, discord in the shape of two Minorite friars arrived in the camp. They brought the news that the Emperor was still unabsolved from his excommunication, and that he had had the effrontery to sail in direct defiance of the Holy Father's commands. They delivered the Papal orders that all faithful Christians were to shun the Emperor as one accursed, and to leave him to make his way alone to Jerusalem if he persisted in his presumptuous and unrepentant sin. Gregory intended the Crusade to fail; he cared

nothing for the recovery of those Holy Places for which Europe had poured out its blood for more than a century : all the Christian in him was obliterated by his virulent anger against the Emperor.

If the arrival of the Papal messengers was not so effective in turning the assembled warriors against their leader as Gregory might have hoped, it at any rate aroused a lively spirit of mutiny. Some of the Crusaders returned to Europe. The Knights Templars and Hospitallers flatly refused to follow the Emperor and persuaded many waverers to adopt the same attitude. With others Frederick's popularity stood him in good stead. The Pisans and Genoese remained faithful, and the stout Germans of the Teutonic Order, under their Grand Master, Hermann von Salza, were not to be turned from their devotion to their Kaiser. This Hermann was a valuable friend : he was a man of most spotless reputation and high renown, a very perfect knight, and throughout his life he was the trusted comrade and loyal subject of Frederick.

Pride at first impelled the Emperor to set out for Jaffa, his proposed base, without the support of the disaffected party, rather than attempt to conciliate them. The news of a formidable force of Turkish horse in the neighbourhood, however, prompted him to halt and compromise with the malcontents, who were following a day's march behind under the leadership of the Grand Masters of the Templars and Hospitallers. These refused to obey any orders issued in the name of an excommunicated Emperor, and demanded that such

orders should be promulgated in the name of God and the Christian Commonwealth. Frederick yielded to necessity, and the combined force, now consisting of eight hundred knights and ten thousand infantry, marched to Jaffa, which they reached in the middle of November. The whole army was immediately employed in surrounding the landward side of the port with strong fortifications.

The news that the Emperor himself, who had dealt with their Saracen kinsfolk in Sicily in so summary a fashion, had at last arrived in their midst to lead the Christian host, spread a wholesome terror throughout the Mohammedan population. His reputation, one rather of personality than of actual martial achievement, had preceded him, and the fact that for more than ten years his coming had been repeatedly rumoured and eagerly expected by their Christian enemies served but to heighten the salutary effect of his final advent. Nor was this the only factor that promised well for the success of the Crusade. Islam itself was disturbed by internal dissensions. The great Sultan Moadhin had died the year before. His brother, Kamel of Cairo, had seized the southern portion of his dominions, which included Palestine, but was not entirely free from anxiety as to the secure tenure of his new possessions, since the rightful heir, Moadhin's son, was supported by a considerable party. There was little fear of a formidable rising, since Kamel's brother, the Sultan of Aleppo, was leagued with him in the laudable task of despoiling their nephew; but Islam could not present so

united a front as it had done during Moadhin's lifetime.

Under such propitious circumstances great results might have been expected from the Crusade if only the whole Christian force had placed itself unreservedly under the sagacious leadership of the Emperor. Dissension, however, aroused by the Papal agents and only temporarily subdued by Frederick's compromise during the march to Jaffa, was raging in the camp, and the news of his adversaries' weakness in this respect could not fail to embolden the Sultan. To Frederick himself it became obvious that he could not hope to wrest submission from the Infidels when the half of his army was plainly hostile to his leadership and might desert his standard at any vigorous assertion of his authority.

Fortunately for the cause of Christendom, Frederick had other resources than the mere force of arms, which was rendered ineffective by disunion. Just as Richard Cœur de Lion and Saladin had discarded religious fanaticism and recognised in each other chivalrous qualities which open the way to an interchange of amenities and friendliness, so Frederick and Kamel were mutually attracted by the love of philosophy and learning. Entirely free from the preposterous narrowness which characterised his age, the Emperor, while still in his own dominions, had not scrupled to exchange courtesies and correspondence with the rulers of the Infidels, and with Sultan Kamel in particular.

The relations thus commenced had continued when Frederick arrived in Palestine. Soon after reaching

Acre, he had sent an embassy to Kamel bearing costly gifts, and had received an elephant and other Eastern animals in return. Once at Jaffa, serious negotiations were opened, which at the same time were accompanied by every evidence of friendship and mutual esteem. Two Emirs were constantly passing between the Christian and Islamite leaders. Frederick would propound problems of philosophy and mathematics which Kamel would answer and in turn set others for the Emperor to solve. Saracen dancing-girls were presented to Frederick who, according to his enemies, paid them more intimate attentions than were becoming in a Christian sovereign. Fanatics on both sides deplored these friendly relations. Both monarchs were accused of betraying their religions and Frederick was said to have become almost a Saracen himself.

The first demands that the Emperor made in the interest of Christendom were couched in a high tone. All towns that the Christians had ever held in the East were to be restored to them. Kamel, however, knew well enough that such demands were unwarranted by the Emperor's power to enforce them. The disunion in the Crusaders' camp had been revealed to him directly by a treacherous attempt of the Templars. Frederick had resolved to make a solitary pilgrimage to the Jordan and to bathe in its holy waters. The Templars wrote to Kamel and informed him of the details of the proposed pilgrimage, so that he might capture the Emperor and imprison him or put him to death. The Sultan, however, refused to take advantage of this perfidious

act, and sent the Templars' letter to their intended victim. It is probable also that other means were taken to increase the Emperor's difficulties. He declared later, and offered to prove to all Europe, that he had intercepted a letter from the Pope to the Sultan which warned the Infidel leader not to surrender Jerusalem to the Emperor.

Conscious of the weakness of his position, Frederick lowered his demands. The negotiations dragged on and on, continually frustrated by the quarrelsome spirit of the ecclesiastical party. Finally his patience gave way. He summoned a council of Crusaders, and informed them that his money was at an end and that he could not stay much longer in Palestine. Concessions had been promised by the Sultan which would restore Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Sidon, and the villages between these towns, to the Emperor and to Christendom. It was his intention, he declared, to accept these terms. The Grand Masters of the Templars and Hospitallers demurred : the Patriarch Gerold was not present, and they could agree to nothing which did not meet with his approval. Gerold had already made himself particularly odious, and Frederick replied that he could very well dispense with his sanction. The Council broke up with varying emotions, the ecclesiastics bitterly hostile to the treaty, the Germans ready to welcome any compact their Kaiser chose to make.

Frederick would have no more delay. Plenipotentiaries were exchanged between Emperor and Sultan, and finally, on the 18th of February, 1229, the treaty was

completed. It consisted of nine articles of which only a bare outline is preserved. 1. Jerusalem was to be surrendered to the Emperor. 2. The Temple of Solomon, which was now the Mosque of Omar, was to be retained by the Saracens. 3. Christians were to be allowed to enter the Temple to pray. 4. Saracens were to be allowed to make pilgrimages to Bethlehem, which to them also was a holy place. 5. The Saracens who remained in Jerusalem were to have their own judges for cases in which only themselves were concerned. 6. The Emperor was to give no aid to either Christian or Saracen who should attack the Sultan during the Truce, which was to last for ten years. 7. He was to restrain Christians from attacking the Sultan. 8. He was bound to aid the Sultan in preventing breaches of the Truce. 9. Tripoli, Antioch, and various other towns outside the Kingdom of Jerusalem which the Christians were attempting to hold, were to remain as they were and the Emperor was to forbid his men to aid them.

Thus after it had remained in Infidel hands for more than forty years, the Holy City was once again restored to Christendom. It was a notable achievement. The Crusade of Frederick has been relegated to the obscurity of a Minor Crusade by historians because it was enlivened by no clash of arms nor signalised by martial victories or great disasters. Yet it achieved more than any Crusade since the First, which had captured Jerusalem in 1099. The Second Crusade, led by the Emperor Conrad III and Louis VII of France, had striven vainly in the middle

of the twelfth century to rescue the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem from the destruction with which it was threatened. In 1187 the city had fallen again into the hands of the Saracens, led by the redoubtable Saladin. The great Barbarossa, Philip Augustus of France and Richard of England had hastened to repel the invaders. Barbarossa had perished miserably by the way : Philip returned to France rather than suffer the humiliation of being eclipsed by the English monarch : Richard himself, for all his gallantry and doughty deeds, failed to recover the Holy City and only succeeded in securing a short-lived toleration for the Christians. The Fourth Crusade had not even set foot in Palestine. In 1221 the Legate Pelagius had led the Fifth Crusade to an ignominious truce on the banks of the Nile. It remained for Frederick the Second, cursed by the Church, thwarted and hindered at every turn by its partisans, with a small army rent by dissensions, to obtain by treaty that which the mightiest monarchs of Europe, blessed and aided by the Pope and with far superior armaments under their leadership, had failed to wrest by the power of the sword.

The Sixth Crusade, or, as it is sometimes called, the second act of the Fifth Crusade, was an amazing personal triumph, its success the work of one man. Frederick's military weakness and the difficulties of his position were known to the Infidels. Yet by the mere weight of his reputation, by some potent spell which his personality exercised over the impressionable Oriental mind, he had induced them peaceably to surrender the sacred city

which they had captured and maintained in spite of all the efforts of Christendom. We may imagine that had he been supported instead of hindered by the Pope, had even the small army at Jaffa unanimously accepted his leadership, he might have gained far greater concessions. "It seems probable," wrote Hermann von Salza in covert reproof to the Pope, "that if our Lord the Emperor had crossed the sea with the favour and peace of the Church, the business of the Holy Land would have prospered much more."

What thanks he might expect from the head of the religion in whose cause he had striven was soon demonstrated. Scarcely had the treaty been signed when a messenger arrived from his Kingdom summoning him back with all speed. Gregory had actually declared a crusade against the absent Crusader, and the Papal armies were invading Apulia, led by Frederick's bitter enemy, John de Brienne, the ex-King of Jerusalem. Frederick, however, was determined to visit Jerusalem before returning to his native Kingdom. In this desire he was not actuated solely by the devotional aspirations of a pilgrim. The recovered city was his own possession by virtue of his marriage with Yolande, and he naturally wished to assume in his new capital the crown of his Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Accompanied by Hermann von Salza and the Teutonic Knights and by many of his Italian subjects, he arrived in the Holy City on the 19th of March. Hot on his heels followed the emissary of the Patriarch Gerold, the Papal gadfly, who proclaimed anew the sentence of excommuni-

cation and laid the city that harboured the accursed Emperor under the interdict. To such a pass had things come that the very burial-place of Christ himself, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was pronounced unholy and all prayer and praise forbidden within its walls.

There were many priests and prelates among Frederick's following who would have ignored the Papal ban and performed any rites their Emperor chose to command: but councils of moderation prevailed, and since no priest could lawfully crown him he resolved to crown himself. He proceeded in state to the Church of the Sepulchre and there, surrounded by the Teutonic Knights clad in their white surcoats marked with a black cross, he lifted the Crown of Jerusalem from the altar and placed it upon his head. Hermann von Salza then spoke in the name of the Emperor.

"It is well known," ran the address, in tones of surprising moderation, "that at Aix-la-Chapelle I took the Cross of my own free will. Hitherto insuperable difficulties have impeded the fulfilment of my vow. I acquit the Pope for his hard judgment of me and for my excommunication; in no other way could he escape the blasphemy and evil report of men. I exculpate him further for his writing against me to Palestine in so hostile a spirit, for men had rumoured that I had levied my army not against the Holy Land but against the Papal States. Had the Pope known my real designs, he would not have written against me but in my favour: did he know how many are acting here to the prejudice

of Christianity he would not pay so much respect to their complaints and representations. . . . I would willingly do all which might expose those real enemies and false friends of Christ who delight in discord, and so put them to shame by the restoration of peace and unity. I will not now think of the high estate which is my lot on earth, but humble myself before God to whom I owe my elevation and before him who is his Vicar on earth."

If such were the sentiments expressed by the Emperor in public, his private words and actions—if we may credit the accounts of Mohammedan chroniclers—were less circumspect. He was said to have asked the Saracens why they had placed gratings over the windows of the Holy Chapel. "To keep out the defilements of the birds," they replied. "You may shut out the birds, but how will ye keep out the swine?" he answered, referring bitterly to his Christian persecutors. On another occasion he was inspecting the Mosque of Omar, when he saw a Christian priest enter with the book of the Gospels in his hands: he considered this an affront to the religious convictions of the Mohammedans and threatened to punish the priest for violating the treaty. The house in which the Emperor slept adjoined a minaret from which the Muezzin was wont to proclaim the hour for prayer and to read certain verses from the Kôran. One night he took for his text: "How is it possible that God had for his son Jesus, the son of Mary?" The Emir feared this would offend the Emperor, and silenced the Muezzin. The sudden

cessation of the cry aroused Frederick's attention as he lay awake, and the next morning he sent for the Emir and enquired the reason. " You are wrong," he declared, " to neglect your duty, your law and your religion on my account. By God, if you should visit me in my realms you will find no such respectful deference." This spirit of toleration was naturally abhorrent to the fanatical Churchmen.

There was no time for the Emperor to tarry in Jerusalem while the Papal armies were overrunning Apulia. He stayed only two days after his Coronation and then, leaving a Prefect to govern the city, he returned to Acre. Needless to say, Gerold had forwarded most venomous accounts of his conduct to Rome. The Pope, too, had denounced the treaty as a monstrous reconciliation of Christ and Belial and, by wilfully confusing the Temple of Solomon with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was endeavouring to persuade Europe that Frederick had left the Holy of Holies in the hands of the Infidels. He adjured Albert of Austria, the most powerful Prince of the Empire, to revolt against his lord and to join the crusade against the enemy of the Church.

The Emperor's last acts in Palestine are only known to us through the source of his enemies. His patience seems at last to have become exhausted before the continual annoyances to which he was subjected, and his conduct at Acre bears evidence of a very justifiable spleen. The Patriarch had attempted to enrol a considerable force in a new Order under his own leadership. Frederick absolutely forbade it and declared that no one should

levy armed forces in his dominions without his authority. He then assembled a vast multitude of the Crusaders and the populace of Acre, with whom he was in high favour, on the seashore. He condemned the obstinate and treacherous hostility of Gerold and the Templars in no measured terms, and commanded all the Crusaders to leave Palestine, as they had now fulfilled their vows. On his return to the city he seized the gates and would admit none but his own followers: the Churches he occupied with his archers. Gerold replied by again proclaiming the sentence of excommunication—it seems that constant recapitulation was necessary to keep it before the popular mind. In return he was kept a prisoner within his own palace and deprived of luxuries, while the Emperor feasted and enjoyed the terpsichorean antics of his Saracen dancing-girls. Two Franciscans who denounced the Emperor from the pulpit were soundly flogged. Gerold in turn laid the city under an interdict.

On the 1st of May Frederick turned his back on the ungrateful shores of Palestine, and as his galleys left the port there floated to him over the water the sound of thanksgiving. Gerold and his followers were raising a "Te Deum" for their deliverance from his accursed presence.

. . . . .

It was high time for the Emperor to return to his Kingdom, for the Papal armies were sweeping all before them in Northern Apulia. Unfortunately the Imperial Viceroy, Raynald, Duke of Spoleto, had been the first

aggressor. Pursuing some rebels into the March of Ancona, he had allowed zeal to outrun discretion, and had trespassed on the Papal territories. Frederick afterwards declared that this was entirely unauthorised and that he had punished Raynald for his temerity. But the mischief was done and the Pope was quick to seize upon the provocation as an excuse for extensive reprisals. He levied large forces and placed them under the warlike Legate Pelagius, John de Brienne and Cardinal John Colonna. A report of Frederick's death in Palestine was industriously circulated in order to dishearten his subjects, and the Papal armies marched into Apulia. The war was prosecuted with a ferocity unusual even in Southern Italy, and the Papal levies vied with Frederick's Saracen soldiery in cruelty.

Gregory meanwhile endeavoured to arouse Europe in the support of his so-called crusade. The frigid unresponsiveness which his Legates everywhere encountered was significant of the disapproval of Christendom. "Men throughout the Christian world," remarks Milman, "could not but doubt by which party the real interests of the Eastern Christians had been most betrayed and injured"; and that the Pope should now endeavour to levy tithes for the prosecution of his wars against the absent Emperor was sufficient to arouse even the ecclesiastics to opposition. England alone sullenly responded to the Papal extortions. Germany stood loyal to her Emperor, in spite of the strenuous efforts of Gregory to arouse sedition: the

Duke of Bavaria half-heartedly raised the standard of revolt and was quickly crushed by the young King Henry.

In Apulia, however, the Banner of the Keys was making rapid headway and the northern districts groaned under the devastations wrought by Gregory's generals. Suddenly the news ran round that the Emperor had returned, and the aspect of the war changed as if by a miracle. He landed near Brindisi on the 10th of June and immediately sent an embassy to the Pope. His overtures were scornfully rejected, and again the sentence of excommunication was repeated. Meanwhile the loyal populace was flocking to his support and he soon had a formidable force under his command, among which were several of the brave Germans who had followed him to Jerusalem. As soon as he learnt that Gregory had refused his offers of reconciliation, he advanced against the invaders. Everywhere he was welcomed as a deliverer and his enemies were confounded. Town after town was regained and the Papal forces broke up in confusion and fled before him.

Gregory now began to yearn for the blessings of peace. In November he sent Hermann von Salza back to the Emperor with the message that he wished the war to end and that a treaty should be made to put an end to this fruitless shedding of Christian blood. Frederick disbanded his army and kept Christmas with high festival in the city of Capua. Many of the Princes of the Empire joined him, anxious to witness the consummation of the peace.

Finally, in the July of 1230, the treaty was concluded at San Germano. Frederick was absolved from the excommunication which had harassed him for nearly three years. In return he made considerable concessions. He granted a complete amnesty to all his subjects who had rebelled against him during his excommunication and restored to them their lands and benefices. He undertook to relinquish all the Papal territories he had occupied and all the estates which he had seized from churches, monasteries, the Orders of the Templars and Hospitallers, and all other allies of the Church. He renounced the right of judging ecclesiastics in the civil courts except in cases which concerned the royal fiefs. Lastly, he actually agreed to levy no more taxes on ecclesiastical property throughout his realm.

We cannot but wonder why Frederick, whose star was undoubtedly in the ascendant at the close of hostilities, should have conceded so much. He appears in the treaty as the conquered rather than the conqueror. No doubt he was very weary of the burden of the Church's curse and anxious for a period of peace in which to govern his realms undisturbed by continued conflict : and for this he was willing to surrender much. Moreover, if he seemed to humble himself, the Pope also, by omitting all mention of Frederick's offences in the matter of the Crusade, by preserving a significant silence with regard to the treaty with the Infidels which originally he had denounced as impious and monstrous, had tacitly recognised the injustice of his fulminations against the Crusader.

On the 1st of September the reconciliation was sealed by the meeting of the two former adversaries. The Emperor visited the Pope at his residence at Anagni and exchanged the kiss of peace. So ended one more scene in the great mediæval drama of the Empire and the Papacy.

Chapter VII

THE YEARS OF SOLACE

PEACE and leisure, which had known Frederick so little during the first thirty-five years of his life, and which, after a brief sojourn, were to know him no more, now came to him for the space of four years. They were spent in the pursuit of those duties for which nature had so eminently fitted him, the work of an enlightened despot, ruling for the good of his people and to his own glory and honour. It was not Germany that he chose for his home during these years. Her skies were too leaden, her people too rude, her princes too powerful and turbulent. In the South was the land of his mother, the land of his birth and his adoption. Here poetry and romance could flourish under the sunny skies, here the people were less slow of mind, here there was more scope for a monarch whose delight was in culture and learning and luxury, and whose spirit could brook no power within his realm that might rival or confine his own.

It is good, then, to be able to turn aside from the contemplation of his strife with the Papacy and to see him as he passed the happiest years of his life on the Western shores of his beloved Kingdom ; now governing his realm with a firm and wise hand, issuing just laws

and repressing evil with the rigour so necessary in mediæval times; now cultivating all the gentler arts of learning and elegance, maintaining undimmed the flame of his intellect while indulging the senses in voluptuous dalliance; spreading abroad such a light of splendour and refinement as to foreshadow in his person the glories of that Renaissance which was yet to tarry for two centuries and more.

It is to the sterner aspect of Frederick's rule during these years that we must first give our attention. He had already, before his Crusade, spent eight years in his Kingdom of Sicily. But his energies during that period had been occupied rather with the reconstruction than innovation: disturbed by the continual calls of the Papacy to fulfil his vows, he had been able to do little more than remedy the mischief which the anarchy that had reigned since the death of his maternal grandfather had wrought. He was now able to devote himself to the higher organisation of the State, and the first step in this direction was the compilation of a new code of laws.

The existing law of the Kingdom was a confused medley of conflicting customs. Romans, Greeks, Goths, Lombards, Normans and Germans had left their mark upon its jurisprudence: Jews and Saracens had their usages: the Church had its private jurisdiction, based upon the Canon Law. Frederick set himself the task of substituting this chaos by a universal code, which should embrace all that was best of the old and all the improvements which he and his councillors could devise.

The keynote of the new system was the substitution of royal supremacy for private privilege. The nobles

were no longer to have the right of judging their vassals : the Churchmen who offended against the law of the land must submit themselves to the justice of the temporal courts : the towns could no longer appoint their own magistrates to interpret the law as they chose. In every town and district the royal courts were erected and the royal officials administered the law of the King. These officials were always strangers to the neighbourhood in which they exercised their functions : they must have no personal interests or prejudices to influence their decisions.

The meanest among these magistrates was secure against the oppression of the powerful or the slander of the discontented. "Be not afraid of abuse," was Frederick's exhortation, "so long as you commend yourself to us ; since our Highness looks to works, not to words." At the same time an official who misused his power was subjected to the severest penalties. "Unjust sentences," declared the royal lawgiver, "cannot be too severely punished, since otherwise the path of truth will be darkened and the oppression of the just will prevail. We condemn to death those judges who have given unjust sentences from any motive. Their goods, especially if they have sinned in capital causes, are confiscated. If any have erred through ignorance, they may thank their own folly in assuming the office of Judge." With the help of such encouragements and warnings an impartial justice was ensured : Frederick himself frequently lost cases in the common courts of the realm.

It is impossible, in limited space, to give even a summary of the comprehensive code of this mediæval Justinian. From a mass of civil and criminal measures we can only select such as are of special interest and serve to illustrate the spirit of the whole. The profession of advocacy, for instance, was subjected to regulations which, however irksome they might be to its members, were certainly for the general good. All would-be advocates must acquit themselves creditably in an examination before a Judicial Bench, and must take an oath that, in the course of their practice, they would allege nothing contrary to their conscience nor accept the advocacy of any cause which they knew to be evil. The fees they might exact from their clients were fixed by the presiding judges. A notable clause enacted that widows and orphans and the poor should receive free legal assistance at the expense of the State.

The dignity of the law was upheld by the enforcing of almost complete silence in the courts. The Judge was bound to give his decision in every case within a period of three days. Bail was now allowed for the first time, except in cases of obvious guilt or high treason. False accusers were fined one-sixth of their goods and futile litigation was discouraged by similar methods, though women in this respect were treated leniently. In spite of his Oriental habits Frederick's public attitude towards women earned him the gratitude of the sex: the law which debarred women from succession to estates was first annulled by him.

The irrational and superstitious system of trial by

ordeal was forbidden by the new code. Trial by combat was also abolished, except in cases of poisoning and high treason, and in these it was discouraged by transferring the choice of weapons from challenger to challenged and by the condemnation to death of the accuser of high treason if he was defeated in the fight that he had provoked. The employment of torture was also strictly limited : it was henceforth only to be used as a last resource in charges of murder against persons of notoriously bad repute.

The evil of private war, so cherished and abused an element of feudalism, was now sternly suppressed. The offender, however high his position, was beheaded. The custom of carrying weapons, so general in other countries for many centuries to come, was henceforth only allowed to courtiers, to knights and burghers on their travels, and to the royal officials in the pursuit of their duties. The occasions when a man might justifiably take the law into his own hands were limited in much the same manner as in modern England. An attack upon life or property might be forcibly repelled, but might not be privately avenged afterwards : the law must be allowed to deal with the offender except in cases of self-defence. A burglar might be slain, but must first be given the opportunity to surrender peaceably.

The persons of women, even of the lowest prostitutes, were protected by the infliction of the severest punishments on the ravisher. Anyone who was within hearing when an outrage was being perpetrated, and who did not respond to the woman's cries for assistance, was heavily

fined. The ravisher incurred the sentence of death or, more frequently, the appropriate mutilation. At the same time the law recognised that man is not always the oppressor, and the woman who falsely accused a man of rape and thereby exposed him to the terrible penalty, was herself condemned to death. The convicted procuress had her nose cut off, was branded on the face and flogged. The man who connived at the adultery of his wife was scourged. A husband might slay a man whom he caught in the act of adultery with his wife; but the deed must be done in hot blood: he must have recourse to the law unless he actually witnessed his dishonour and avenged it immediately.

The sentence of death was necessarily a frequent one in a country which had passed through so long a period of disorder, though Frederick removed it in many instances. It was still inflicted on coiners, incendiaries, destroyers of will and compounders of fatal love potions. Mutilation was a frequent punishment: blasphemers lost their tongues; perjurers and robbers of corpses were deprived of their hands. Such a code may seem barbarous enough, but it was considerably less severe than the general character of the laws it replaced, and the state of the country rendered any more remarkable alleviation of penalties impossible. Moreover it compares favourably with our own law of even two centuries ago.

Frederick made a determined effort to check the rapid progress of heresy throughout his dominions. He had already issued stringent edicts on this subject at his

Coronation and now increased the severity of the penalties. It is not likely that he was inspired by religious motives in this policy, for his own beliefs were regarded with great suspicion by the ecclesiastics. But a freedom of thought that might be permitted in himself and his Court became dangerous when shared by the common people. Unorthodox views on religion were too often accompanied by unorthodox views on all established systems and institutions, and Frederick realised that the growth of heresy was a menace to the security of the temporal as well as the spiritual power. Of other religions he was tolerant beyond his day: Greeks, Jews and Saracens throughout his Kingdom might worship as they pleased.

Gregory IX, adopting the graceful pose of protector of the poor as a cloak wherewith to cover his antagonism to Frederick, constantly accused him of oppressing his subjects with grievous taxation. It is significant, however, that the common people, upon whom the burden of taxation would naturally fall most heavily, were the most loyal portion of the community. The nobles, stripped of many of their privileges and curbed in their licence, might revolt against him: the higher ecclesiastics, deprived of their immunity from all obligations to the State and rendered amenable to the common law of the land, might be bitterly hostile: but the general mass of the people, burghers and peasants alike, realised that they were singularly happy in their King.

It is true that the taxation was heavy and increased in severity year by year, as the Emperor became more

deeply involved in his mortal combat with the Papacy. Yet he did everything to mitigate the burden which the antagonism of the Popes imposed upon his people. The royal officials were restrained from illegal extortion. The merchant might trade in peace and security, and the tiller of the soil might reap his harvest undisturbed by the private wars of the barons and free from their oppression. In times of scarcity the taxes were lightened as far as possible, and the poorer districts were assessed less heavily than flourishing towns and provinces. Commerce was stimulated not only by internal peace and improved and standardised coinage, but by wise regulation and encouragement. Freedom of exchange was established between the various Provinces. Fairs and markets were increased and organised. Desirable immigrants were attracted, by the remission of taxation for ten years from their arrival, to introduce new industries or to cultivate neglected lands. Commercial treaties were formed with Venice, Asia, Genoa, Greece and Africa. Frederick himself set the example of enterprise, and the royal merchant ships sailed to Syria, Egypt and the East : even India was visited by his factors. Agriculture was fostered by similar methods. Waste districts were planted with corn and vines. Model farms were established on the royal estates where the peasants might learn the effect of intelligent husbandry. The royal stud farms improved the strain of horses and cattle throughout the countryside. Serfdom was abolished on all the royal domains and gradually suppressed throughout the Kingdom. No measure was neglected

that might increase the resources of his realm and contribute to the prosperity of his people. "The glory of Rulers," he was wont to declare, "is the safe and comfortable state of their subjects."

Frederick was the first monarch in mediæval Europe to summon the Third Estate to a Parliament. Representatives from the towns of his Kingdom were called twice a year to assemble together "for the weal of the Kingdom and the general advantage of the State." It is unlikely that this Assembly had any great authority, and its chief function was probably the adjustment of taxation. The royal writ contains no invitation to assist in legislation. "Send your messengers," it ran, "to see the serenity of our face on your behalf and to bring you back our will." It was, however, undoubtedly a first step in the direction of popular representation, and it is more than probable that Simon de Montfort, who visited the Imperial Court, was inspired by this example when, some thirty years later, he summoned the famous Parliament at Westminster.

Side by side with these beneficent measures for the material welfare of his people, projects were carried out for their intellectual enlightenment. It is this aspect of his rule which excites the enthusiastic admiration of Milman. "That which—if the constitution of Frederick had continued to flourish, if the institutions had worked out in peace their natural consequences, if the house of Hohenstaufen had maintained their power, splendour and tendencies to social and intellectual advancement, if they had not been dispossessed by the

dynasty of Charles of Anjou and the whole land thrown back by many centuries—might have enabled the southern Kingdom to take the lead, and anticipate the splendid period of Italian learning, philosophy and art, was the Universities; the establishments for education; the encouragements for all learned and refined studies, imagined by this accomplished King."

The University of Naples was his foundation and his especial care. The most famous scholars of the day were invited to fill its professorial chairs. Its curriculum was extended to more liberal studies than that of Theology which absorbed so much of the mental effort of the day. The Law which he himself had promulgated, Mathematics, Languages, Philosophy, the treasures of Greek and Arabian learning, Aristotle, Ptolemy, Averrhoes, by his orders translated into the Latin tongue and rendered accessible to the students of Naples, all these found their votaries in the new University. The weapons of the despot were enlisted to ensure its success. No student was henceforth to study in foreign universities: all emigrant scholars were to return immediately now that such ample provision was offered in their native country. "We keep the students," declared Frederick, recounting the advantages that he offered to his subjects, "within view of their parents: we save them many toils and long foreign journeys: we protect them from robbers; they used to be pillaged while travelling abroad; they may now study with small cost and short wayfaring." The cost of their lodging was fixed at a definite rate. If they were

in need of money the authorities would advance it at a low rate of interest and would not harass them for repayment until the years of study were completed. To those students who showed exceptional promise the King offered posts of honour and profit in his own service.

The medical schools of Salerno were also fostered by his liberality and wise regulation. Here Italians, Greeks, Hebrews and Arabians might study in their own tongues. The works of Hippocrates and Galen and the study of anatomy were recommended by the royal patron, himself well versed in the medical knowledge of the day. The physicians who had studied successfully at Salerno were ensured against the competition of the unqualified. No man might practise medicine who could not produce a testimonial from his professors and a licence from the Court of Salerno, and a probation of eight years must be spent before such a licence could be obtained : three years must be devoted to the study of logic and five to medicine and surgery. The graduate must then subscribe to many oaths, the most notable being to the effect that he would always supply free advice to the destitute.

The King himself was first among his subjects in learning. Rarely in the history of the world has so accomplished a monarch filled a throne. "In sheer genius," writes Freeman, "he was the greatest prince who ever wore a crown." Six languages had been mastered before he had attained the prime of manhood : he could talk fluently in Latin and Greek, German,

Italian, Arabic and Hebrew. With his philosophical problems, called the Sicilian Questions, he confounded the wise men of Egypt, Syria, Irak, Daroub and Tunis. One philosopher, Ibn Sabin, was at last found in Saracen Spain who could answer them to Frederick's satisfaction, and he, it must be confessed, replied in a tone of lofty patronage. "You must know," wrote this infallible sage, "that all these questions of yours are already known here better than a beacon fire. Another time you must throw them into a more obscure form; for we have Mussulman doctors, sharper than swords or scissors, men who are not true philosophers but mere wiseacres; these men are not versed in these discussions, and they conclude that both questioner and respondent are fools. If these men knew that I had answered your questions, they would regard me as they do the problems: and then I might escape or not, as Allah might direct."

The science of Mathematics was an open book to Frederick: he corresponded and exchanged problems with the most learned mathematicians of all countries. The illustrious scholar and astrologer, Michael Scott, sojourned awhile at the Sicilian Court, attracted thither by the Emperor's fame. He dedicated a translation of Avicenna's work on Animals to his illustrious patron, with the hope that it might be an ornament to the head and a chain to the neck of the Lord of Earth: he also compiled a work on Physiognomy at Frederick's request, which was one of the first manuscripts to be printed.

Medicine and the Natural Sciences absorbed a great share of the Emperor's attention. He wrote a Latin

treatise on hawking and on birds of prey which betrays a knowledge of anatomy and ornithology which even our own day must regard with respect. Many and curious are the stories which were circulated by his enemies of the fearful lengths to which his ardent thirst for knowledge led him. Some of these are still available to us in the quaint wording of the chronicle of Fra Salimbene. One relates a gruesome instance of human vivisection. "He fed two men most excellently at dinner, one of whom he forthwith sent to sleep and the other to hunt; and that same evening he caused them to be disembowelled in his presence; wishing to know which had digested the better; and it was judged in favour of him who had slept." Another describes an experiment to ascertain the original language of mankind. He gathered several newly-born babies together, "bidding foster-mothers and nurses to suckle and bathe and wash the children but in no wise to prattle or speak with them; for he would have learnt whether they would speak the Hebrew language (which had been the earliest) or Greek or Latin or Arabic; or perchance the tongue of their parents of whom they had been born. But he laboured in vain, for the children could not live without clappings of hands and gestures and gladness of countenance and blandishments." Whether the experiment was pursued to fatal lengths is not clear.

Another victim of Frederick's curiosity, according to Salimbene, was one Nicholas the Fish, a native of Sicily, upon whom his mother had invoked the amiable curse that he might ever live in the water and seldom come to

land. The man developed extraordinary powers of diving and enduring for a great while under water, which phenomenon excited the Emperor's lively interest. "He oft-times sent this Nicholas against his will to the bottom of the Faro, and oft-times he returned thence; and wishing to know in sooth whether he had indeed gone down to the bottom and returned thence, the Emperor threw in his golden cup where he thought the depth was greatest. So Nicholas plunged and found it and brought it back, whereat the Emperor marvelled greatly. But when he would have sent him again, he said, 'Send me not thither, I pray you; for the sea is so troubled in the depths that if ye send me I shall never return.' Nevertheless the Emperor sent him; so there he perished and never returned: for in those sea depths are great fishes at times of tempests, and rocks and many wrecks of ships, as he himself reported. He might have said to Frederick in the words of Jonah: 'Thou hast cast me into the deep, in the heart of the sea, and the flood encompassed me round about; all thy whirlpools and waves have gone over me.'"

At Frederick's right hand, his chief minister and most favoured servant, his adviser in the making of laws and the government of his Kingdom and his friend in the hours of relaxation, stood Peter de Vinea. Born in extreme poverty, he had first attracted the attention of the Archbishop of Palermo, who was so impressed by his unusual wisdom that he recommended him to the Emperor's notice. His rise to eminence was rapid, his enjoyment of the royal favour long, and his fall infinitely

more tragic than that of Wolsey. The relations between master and servant were intimate. A Piedmontese tale relates how the Emperor wandered one night into the bedchamber of Peter's beautiful wife. The rounded arms of the sleeping lady lay outside the coverlet and Frederick gently covered them up and withdrew: but he dropped his glove on the floor beside the bed and Peter discovered it some hours later. His suspicions were naturally aroused and he refused to speak to his wife. She, greatly concerned, informed the Emperor of her husband's inexplicable displeasure, and both were summoned to the royal presence. The three sat in silence for some moments, and then Peter broke out into impromptu verse:—

> "On a Vineyard another plant trespassing came,
> And ruined the Vineyard, O villainous shame!"

The lady replied in a similar measure:—

> "Thy Vineyard I am and still will be,
> For my Vineyard was never untrue to thee."

The relieved husband promptly made amends:—

> "If this be so, as she says, then I vow
> That the Vineyard I'll love more than ever now."

And forthwith he commenced a poem on the twelve months of the year to express the joy of his heart. His suspicions seem to have been very easily allayed, but his trust was justified. Frederick, so far as we know, never sinned with the sin of David. His high conception of the dignity of his august position and his extreme

natural jealousy withheld him from seeking his pleasures where he must share with, or at least succeed, a lawful spouse.

Peter de Vinea was skilled in the making of poetry, and has left to us the first sonnet in the Italian tongue. This gentle art, so long neglected in Southern Italy, held high sway at Frederick's Court, and the Emperor's cultivation of it has earned for him the title of "the Father of Italian Poetry," bestowed by the greatest of Italian poets. The soft language of Sicily, which was to become the vulgar tongue of Italy, was chosen by the Emperor and his courtiers as the medium for their songs. "The illustrious heroes, Frederick Cæsar and his noble son Manfred," says Dante, "followed after elegance and scorned that which was mean; so that all the best compositions of the time came out of their Court. Thus, because their royal throne was in Sicily, all the poems of our predecessors in the vulgar tongue were called Sicilian." Frederick himself was a poet who sung the charms of his lady and the beauties of nature, and a few of his verses still survive in the Italian Parnassus. His sons, Manfred, Enzio and Conrad contributed to the volume of song which resounded through his Court.

Learning and art, music and poetry, all the elegance and culture and luxury which the enlightened mind of man can devise, reigned in the Emperor's palaces; and with them the amorous freedom which is their almost inevitable companion, especially under Southern skies. Frederick, first among his subjects in intellect, was first

also in this. At Lucera he kept a permanent harem, guarded by black eunuchs, and it was a grave cause for scandal that this seraglio was chiefly filled with infidel women. To every place where he was residing at the moment a number of these concubines would follow him. Even on his military expeditions into Lombardy they would accompany him, carried in palanquins or riding on camels, and the loss of these "pretty dears" was, according to a Parmese verse-maker, the bitterest feature of his defeat before Parma in 1248. His Oriental tastes did not limit themselves to the maintenance of a harem. His second and third wives were secluded like Eastern Sultanas, and rarely exposed to the public gaze. It was considered a great honour that Richard of Cornwall, the brother of the third Empress, was granted the favour of a long private conversation with her on his visit to Frederick some years later. His favourite mistress, Bianca Lancia, was surrounded with scarcely less irksome precautions. It is regrettable that we know so little about this lady, who seems to have been the chief romance of Frederick's life. She was a Piedmontese of noble birth, and her relations with the Emperor commenced in 1231, while he was a widower. He was constant, though not faithful, to her for the remainder of her life, and just before her death, which occurred after the decease of his third wife, he married her at her urgent request, to legitimatise the children she had borne him. The Church, however, refused to recognise the union, since the Emperor was excommunicate at the time.

In spite of his voluptuous habits, Frederick was active in body. He was a devotee of the chase and the forests of Western Apulia were studded with his hunting lodges. In the pursuit of the deer he would employ hunting leopards, or cheetahs, which he had obtained from the East for this purpose. Falconry also was a favourite sport, and the Emperor was more learned in its science than any of his falconers. We can picture him as he rode out with the hooded bird on his wrist, a man of middle height, stoutly built, with broad, high brow, firm but rather sensuous mouth, and the reddish hue of the Hohenstaufens in his hair. On his right would be the fair Bianca, on his left Peter de Vinea, his familiar spirit. Behind him would ride a gay and glittering throng of lords and ladies, with perhaps many a turban-clad Saracen in their midst; for Frederick's Court was cosmopolitan in character and a learned or noble visitor would always find a welcome there, whatever his nationality or religion. If he was a warrior returning from the Crusade he would be given healing baths and soft raiment, and beautiful handmaidens for his solace and attendance. He would be shown the wonders of the royal palace. Perhaps Frederick himself would conduct him round his menagerie, would point out the great elephant presented by Sultan Kamel, the leopards, lions, panthers, camels, dromedaries and rare birds, all tended by Saracen keepers. His eyes would be dazzled by the Imperial treasures, a throne made of pure gold and encrusted with pearls and gems, a wonderful tent which by some mechanical device displayed the movements of the heavenly bodies

and the seasons of the year, and other riches of precious stones and sumptuous fabrics from Eastern looms. In the evening he would be invited to the banquet, where, though the Emperor himself was sparing of food and drink, the most varied viands and the choicest wines would repose upon the table. Black musicians would play strange instruments, and Saracen dancing-girls would astonish the foreigner with their feats, pirouetting and swaying upon large balls which they would revolve the while with their feet. He would carry home to his own land glowing tales of the splendour of the Emperor's Court, of the fabulous wealth of gold and rich silks, of the novel entertainments and Oriental luxury, of the learned discourse of Frederick and his courtiers; and probably also a substantial token of the royal munificence.

Like most powerful rulers of ancient and mediæval times, Frederick was a great builder. His palaces, many of them of Saracen architecture, abounded in the island of Sicily on the western shores of the mainland. All were destroyed in the succession of invasions which the unhappy country afterwards experienced: a single arch of the Palace of Foggia is almost the only fragment that is left. Of his many castles that of del Monte, near Andria, still stands, one of the most perfect survivals in Italy. It is something more than a mere defensive structure: its fine vaulted halls are decked with marble and mosaics and its windows adorned with sculpture. The castle of Capua, long since demolished, was ornamented with statues, marbles and alabaster: its main

entrance was surmounted by a bas-relief representing Frederick in his Crown and Imperial robes, on his right and left the two chief advisers of his realm, Peter de Vinea and Thaddaeus of Suessa. He also built many cities, which he peopled by despotic means. His activities were not confined to his Southern Kingdom: many castles were erected in Northern Italy, in the endeavour to overawe the turbulent cities of Lombardy, Tuscany and Romagna.

The peoples of these territories, for the most part so bitterly hostile to the Hohenstaufen name, could not be insensible to the refining influence which radiated from Frederick's Court. That they were sadly in need of such influence is made evident by many references to their rude and barbarous ways, and exemplified in the following incident. The deputies of Savona were awaiting an audience with the Emperor during his visit to Cremona in 1226, when the ambassadors of the rival city of Genoa entered the chamber. The unmannerly Savonese commenced to pull wry faces at their approach and made vulgar gestures expressive of a violent physical nausea. "The people of Italy," wrote a Dominican chronicler late in the century, "from Aquileia to Vercelli in particular, in Frederick's time lived in a barbarous and strange fashion; their food, raiment and arms were alike uncouth; their dialect, their amusements, and their dances were all coarse. Frederick changed everything and taught the Italians better ways: he was remarkable among all the Emperors, being endowed with courteous, noble and elegant manners."

So, in splendour and wisdom of governance such as his generation had never seen, such as had not been known for many centuries in the history of the western world, passed the golden years of Frederick's life. If Europe regarded his sway with wonder and admiration, the Church viewed it in a very different light. To the jealous and distrustful eye of the Pope and his myrmidons, every aspect of his rule seemed to redound to the harm of the Church, to the lowering of its prestige and the undermining of its authority. His just and equitable code of laws was but a rival to the ancient jurisprudence of the Church. Where other nations based their codes upon the Canon Law and accepted the advice and influence of ecclesiastics in their compilation and their execution, Frederick had discarded every precedent that did not commend itself to him on its own merits, however sanctified by the ancient usage of the Church. If other monarchs followed him in this irreverent independence, the Church would lose its immemorial influence over the jurisprudence of the peoples of Christendom.[1] The highly organised system of Government which he had erected, however much it might tend to the happiness and prosperity of his Kingdom, deprived the clergy of those immunities which they had so long enjoyed and degraded them to a position of equality with the lay subjects of the State. His very efforts for the intellectual enlightenment of his people seemed mischievous, for at his University of Naples the study of

[1] Gregory replied by issuing a revision of the Canon Law at this time.

Theology had given place to more liberal learning, and the Church suspected, and in later centuries was to know only too well, that liberal learning was an enemy to its sway over the minds of men. The culture that reigned supreme at Frederick's Court seemed evil because it contained so much that was pagan and infidel in origin. The profane and amorous poetry of Frederick and his satellites, his Oriental tastes, his triflings with infidel women, all these things were bitterly condemned. If he built for himself castles and palaces, he raised no sacred spires to the glory of God. His philosophical researches, his mathematical lore, were meant to raise human nature to the level of divine knowledge. The fearful result was to be seen in his own contempt for sacred things. The doctrine of Transubstantiation, recently endorsed by the Papacy, came under the lash of his ridicule. "How many Gods will be made out of this corn in my lifetime!" he was believed to have said when riding through a field of grain: "How long will this mummery last!" as he saw the sacred elements being carried in solemn procession through the streets. God, he declared, would never have chosen the barren country of Judaea as the Promised Land if He had seen his own beautiful realm of Sicily. He was even reported to have said that the world had been led away by three impostors—Moses, Christ and Mahomet. Such and such were the abominations which proceeded from his mouth, from the mouth of one who was not merely the King of Sicily but the Emperor of Rome, the first monarch of Christendom, who should be beyond all men in rever-

ence for holy things, and—let it not be forgotten—in dutiful submission to the Vicar of Christ.

Retribution must follow and the proud must be brought low: and meanwhile Gregory pondered on these injuries and treasured them up in his heart.

Chapter VIII

THE REBELLIOUS SON

THE years of Frederick's rest in Sicily came to an end in 1235, and from henceforth his life was to be surrounded by storm and stress and passed in a struggle so endless and wearisome that his days were shortened and bereft of all gladness. The Papacy was not the first disturber of his peace: for the present Pope and Emperor were to appear before the world as friends and were even to aid each other against their enemies, though always there was an undercurrent of suspicion and hostility, and ceaseless wranglings and recriminations, which in 1239 were to culminate in the inevitable strife. Meanwhile the Emperor was called away from his Apulian palaces by the rebellion of his son Henry and by the aggressive turbulence of the Lombard towns.

As early as 1231 he had left his Southern Kingdom for a while in the endeavour to check the civil warfare which was incessantly raging in Lombardy. This portion of the Empire was a source of continual humiliation to the Hohenstaufen Kaisers. The cities clung to their freedom with an obstinacy and courage that would have been entirely admirable had they not abused that freedom by the most ferocious internal dissensions.

They resented the slightest exercise of the Imperial authority, and if their outraged Lord brought his armies to their chastisement they would retire behind their massive walls, which were almost impregnable before the military engines of the time. The reduction of even one of the cities of the League would then entail a protracted siege, and the reduction of a score was an almost impossible task. Barbarossa had tried to solve the problem in 1162 by burning Milan, the head city of the League, utterly to the ground. But Milan had risen again from her ashes, summoned the League to action once more, and crushed the might of Germany at the battle of Legnano. The treaty of Constance wrung from Barbarossa by this defeat had reduced the Imperial lordship of Northern Italy almost to a shadow. His grandson might have been content with this very moderate suzerainty if only this part of his dominions had maintained a peaceful demeanour. But when he looked from his Kingdom, where his authority was absolute and order reigned supreme, to the northern part of Italy, which was one vast and sanguinary scene of confusion, the contrast became intolerable to his pride. And when peaceful persuasion was rejected with the most violent antagonism, he took up the task which Barbarossa had attempted with such disastrous results.

In 1231, then, Frederick advanced northwards with a small following and summoned King Henry and the German Princes, and the cities of Northern Italy, to meet him at Ravenna, where a Diet was to be held and

an attempt made to appease the disturbances of Lombardy and the neighbouring provinces. The Lombards not only disdained to attend the Diet, but by their hostility compelled Henry and his Germans to travel southwards with the utmost secrecy. Some Ghibelline cities—Pisa, Genoa, Parma, Modena, Cremona and Pavia—sent their envoys and announced their readiness to co-operate in whatever measures the Emperor should decide to take against Milan and her allies. Such measures, however, were obviated by the partial submission of the League. Frightened by the Emperor's expressed intention of punishing them for hindering his Diet by their attitude, they sought the mediation of the Pope. Frederick, anxious to return to his work in his Kingdom, agreed to recognise Gregory as arbitrator, and in May, 1232, a temporary peace was made which postponed the threatened war for four years.

While in the North, Frederick first became acquainted with a noble who was to play a prominent part in the coming struggle. Eccelin de Romano, one of the most sinister figures of his century, was the representative of a powerful family of North-eastern Italy. He was a brilliant soldier, loyal to the cause he chose to follow, but possessed with an inordinate lust of power, and cruel to an extent that rendered him remarkable even in a cruel age. Entirely indifferent to sexual emotions and lusts, women as well as men were the victims of his cold-blooded barbarity, and were subjected to the most exquisite tortures that the refined cruelty of the Italian mind could devise. Dante places him in Hell, in 'the

crimson-seething flood' reserved for tyrants who were given to blood and to rapine. "This Eccelin," writes Salimbene, "was feared worse than the Devil: he held it of no account to slay men, women and children, and he wrought such cruelty as men have scarce heard. I believe most certainly that as the Son of God wished to have one specially whom He might make like unto Himself, namely St. Francis, so the Devil chose Eccelin."[1] He was a Ghibelline in politics, and as soon as the war broke out between the Emperor and the League he ranged himself on the side of Frederick, and was made Imperial Vicar in Lombardy. Serving his own interests as well as those of his master, he made himself Lord of Verona, Vicenza, Padua and other cities in North-eastern Lombardy. He always remained staunch to Frederick and shared with him the enmity of the Church, to which he fell a victim nine years after Frederick's death. Undoubtedly he rendered valuable material service to the Emperor, but the alliance of such a monster of cruelty could not enhance Frederick's good repute throughout Christendom.

The meeting between King Henry and his father, who

[1] The following incident, however, seems to show that Eccelin was not entirely destitute of human virtues. At the taking of Verona by the Imperial troops in 1236, he saw a German noble outraging some Veronese ladies, and on his command to desist being ignored, he straightway struck off the ravisher's head. Frederick, who was standing by, suggested that this was rather a summary punishment for a crime so common during the sack of a city. Whereupon Eccelin answered: "I should have done the same to you, Emperor, had you been guilty of so great a scandal."

had been separated for twelve years, cannot have been a very happy reunion. Ever since the death of his guardian, the good Archbishop Engelbert of Cologne, in 1225, Henry had followed evil courses. He had become a profligate and had surrounded himself with parasitical favourites. The government of Germany had been neglected and its revenues dissipated in the maintenance of a licentious and frivolous Court. If report spoke truly he had even made a secret league with Milan against his father, prompted thereto by jealousy of the Emperor's attachment to his second son Conrad. Frederick would have been wiser and kinder if he had taken the power for evil out of Henry's hands; but he dealt leniently with him and, crediting his promises of amendment, even allowed him a fuller authority in Germany.

The realisation of his mistake was soon brought home to the Emperor. Father and son parted in the March of 1232, the one to resume his wise rule of Sicily, the other to plunge still more deeply into folly and vice and to invite inevitable ruin. A madness seemed to seize upon the young Henry, the only rebellious son the house of Hohenstaufen had ever known. He sowed the seed of discontent against his father, and received at his Court nobles who had been banished from the Kingdom. He endeavoured vainly to enlist the Duke of Austria and the King of France on his side. Strasburg and many towns on the Upper Rhine were induced to cast off their allegiance to the Emperor, and to proclaim Henry as their only lord: three Prelates also lent themselves to

his schemes. Finally, in December, 1234, he entered into a treaty with the Lombard League and raised the standard of rebellion.

So grave a situation called for Frederick's own presence in Germany, and in the April of 1235 he left his Kingdom to chastise his disobedient son. Gregory for once gave the Emperor his whole-hearted support, and excommunicated Henry. At the same time he wrote to the German Prelates and exhorted them to stand loyal to their temporal lord. "We have had long experience," he wrote, in bland disregard of the past, "of the devotion of our dearest son in Christ, the Emperor Frederick. His son Henry, unmindful of the Divine love, a scorner of human affection, is a rock of offence to the Emperor. Bring the youth back to the right path: in these times there should be peace for the sake of the Holy Land. We absolve all men from any oaths they may have taken against the Emperor."

In May Frederick crossed the Alps and arrived in Germany. In spite of the resentment the Germans might justly feel at his open preference for his southern dominions, and in spite of the rapidly increasing mischief wrought by his son, he came with the scantiest following, relying on the personal devotion of the German Princes and their loyalty to his house. His confidence was quickly justified. The nobles of his ancestral duchy of Suabia and a number of the Princes, among them the Dukes of Saxony and Bavaria, flocked to meet him at Ratisbon. The rebellion collapsed without daring to show its face to the Emperor. King Henry, utterly deserted by all

his adherents, was compelled to surrender, and submitted himself to his father at Worms.

The unhappy youth might have been allowed to retain his freedom, even though stripped of his power, had he not been driven by some malignant madness to his own destruction. He suddenly withdrew his unconditional acceptance of Frederick's terms, refused to surrender the Castle of Trifels, once the prison of Richard Cœur de Lion, which had been given to him as part of his personal estate, and finally made an attempt to escape from Worms. Frederick's patience was at an end. He sent the rebel under escort to Apulia, where he was imprisoned in one of the royal castles. For seven years he lingered in confinement, transferred periodically from one castle to another and closely guarded. Finally, in a fit of futile passion he put an end to his life by dashing himself from his horse on to the rocky ground. Frederick mourned his death in fitting terms. "The feelings of the father overpower those of the Judge," he wrote, "and we are forced to bewail the death of our eldest son. We confess that though we could not be bent by our son when living, we mourn him when dead. We are not the first or the last who have wept for the death of undutiful sons."

Some two months after his arrival in Germany, and when all traces of the rebellion had been effaced by Henry's banishment to an Apulian prison, the Emperor took unto himself a third wife. This time it was an English bride that he chose, Isabella, the daughter of John and the sister of the reigning King Henry III.

Negotiations had been opened before the Emperor left his Kingdom, and Peter de Vinea had been one of the envoys to lay the Imperial proposal before the English monarch. Henry took counsel with his Prelates and nobles, and after a deliberation which lasted three days, the Princess Isabella was brought before the Emperor's ambassadors. "She appeared before them," writes the English chronicler, Roger de Wendover, "a lady in her twentieth year, beautiful to look upon, adorned with virgin modesty and distinguished by her royal dress and manners. After they had refreshed their sight for some time with gazing on the lady, they decided that she was most worthy in all respects of the Imperial couch and confirmed the marriage on the soul of the Emperor by oath, presenting her with a wedding ring in his name: after they had placed it on her finger they proclaimed her Empress of Rome, all exclaiming 'Long live our Empress!'"

She was conducted in state by her brother to Dover and there bade farewell to her kin. In May she landed at Antwerp and was surrounded with a large army which her future lord had sent to guard her. The cities of the Upper Rhine gave her a most royal welcome: the burghers of Cologne turned out some ten thousand strong to meet her on the road, and conducted her into their town, which immediately gave itself over to festival and merriment. Here she abode for six weeks, until the Emperor was sufficiently free from the anxieties of the late rebellion to turn his thoughts to more pleasant matters. From there she proceeded to Worms, where

Frederick received her with joy and respect. "He was beyond measure delighted with her beauty," continues Wendover, "and the marriage was solemnised at that place on Sunday, the 20th of July. And although her beauty pleased the Emperor at first sight, he was much more pleased after marriage. . . . There were many, however, in the Roman Empire, who thought it was degrading for the Emperor, who was so powerful and rich and who was, as it were, the lord and governor of the whole world, to marry the sister of an English king." Which slight upon his country the chronicler resents, and proceeds to point out that Isabella can trace her descent back through a long line of kings to Alfred the Great, and thence, in all probability, to Adam and Eve.

According to the same authority, there were no less than four Kings at the Imperial wedding, besides eleven Dukes, thirty Counts and Margraves, and many Prelates. The Emperor, who had a weakness for astrology, awaited the propitious conjunction of the heavenly bodies before he would proceed to the nuptial couch. The fact that seventeen months elapsed before a child was born to him, and that child a girl, must have considerably shaken his faith in the science of his astrologers.

A month after his marriage Frederick held the great Diet of Mayence, where all Germany flocked to do homage to its Kaiser. Only one Prince was absent from the mighty throng which attended him. Even the head of the house of Guelf, which for a hundred years had refused to bow the knee to its Hohenstaufen

rivals, was among them. Otho, the son of that Emperor whom Frederick had overthrown, placed his hands between those of his father's enemy and swore to become his man; and for this submission was created Duke of Brunswick. Six Archbishops and twenty-one Bishops swore fealty for their temporal possessions. Twelve thousand knights and deputies from every city joined in the acclamations which greeted their Hohenstaufen lord, who had once more favoured Imperial Germany with his presence. Frederick might gaze on the vast concourse and reflect with some pride that he held his high place not merely by virtue of his descent, but as the prize of his own daring, the fruit of that adventure of his youth when, twenty-three years ago, he had crossed the Alps almost alone to regain the heritage of his fathers. No future Emperor was to hold the rule of so wide a realm as Frederick at the Diet of Mayence. "It was the last exhibition of the Holy Roman Empire in all its old pomp and unity; it was the last time that any Cæsar saw both Germany and Italy at his feet, and was able to scorn the bare idea of foreign interference with his realms, whether to the North or South of the Alps."[1]

The Diet was signalised by the promulgation of a revised code of laws, called the Constitution of Fifteen Chapters. It consisted for the most part of the old

[1] T. L. Kington's *History of Frederick the Second.* A detailed and dispassionate work to which the author is much indebted. It is based upon the collection of original authorities and documents formed by M. Huillard-Bréholles.

German custom, with a few additions by Frederick himself. Although in his Southern Kingdom the nobles and clergy were stripped of many of their powers, here in the North, where the Emperor himself could not always be present to rule with a firm hand, the authority of the Princes and higher ecclesiastics was maintained. Among many ordinances of a general character, the new Constitution contained a clause which must have been prompted by Frederick's own recent and bitter experience. " Ingratitude is always hateful," it ran, " especially when a son turns against his father. Whoever strives to eject his father from his possessions or make a league with his father's enemies, is to lose all right to his personal inheritance ; and if a son plots his father's death, he can never be restored to his rights." In accordance with this law Henry was formally deposed from the Kingship of Germany, or the Kingship of the Romans as it was more commonly called. It is probable that the boy Conrad was chosen in his stead, though the election was not made public for two years.

A more warlike scene was also enacted before the Diet dissolved. The assembled Princes and knights swore to follow their Kaiser against the insolent Lombards, who had added to their long list of injuries by instigating and abetting Henry's rebellion. They had invited him to cross the Alps and promised to invest him with the iron crown of Lombardy. They had also harassed the Ghibelline or pro-Imperial cities in their neighbourhood, and these implored the Emperor to avenge them. Frederick declared that if the Pope, who had undertaken

to mediate between the two antagonists, did not bring the League to an adequate submission before Christmas, he would lead his armies into Lombardy in the following year.

Gregory was suspected of underhand dealings with the Emperor's rebellious subjects. It is true that he had recently supported Frederick in the suppression of his son's insurrection, but as the Head of the Church he could hardly avoid the duty of chastising unfilial conduct, unless he wished to fling aside all pretence of holiness and decency. With the independence of Northern Italy, on the other hand, his interests were intimately concerned. If once the sturdy cities became meekly submissive to the Emperor, he would be hedged in North and South by the Imperial power, and would have no militant ally to assist him. The Lombards, moreover, had always belonged to the Guelfic or Papal party, and it was very natural that Frederick should be sceptical of the sincerity of Gregory's declared efforts to bring them to reason. Such a scepticism was amply justified by later events.

The old state of tension in the relations of Pope and Emperor was rapidly reviving, and in the October of 1235 the peace nearly came to a sudden end. Gregory had written to the Prelates who had been seduced by Henry from their loyalty to the Emperor, and upbraided them for their conduct : they were ordered to appear at Rome to answer for their offence. He considered that the punishment of these high ecclesiastics was his own function and not that of their temporal lord. Frederick,

however, intervened in the matter, and as the guilty Prelates showed no sign of obeying the Pope's summons, he forthwith drove them to Rome by threats and commands. At the same time he appointed one of the Royal Judges to administer the civil duties of the Bishop of Worms, who was one of the unwilling pilgrims. This seems a reasonable enough measure, but in the eyes of Gregory it was an interference in the Church's affairs which was not to be borne. He flew into a violent passion, and Hermann von Salza, who was acting as Frederick's ambassador, had much ado to prevent the fiery old man from launching another excommunication against the Emperor, who had dared to lay sacrilegious hands upon the Ark. Finally von Salza soothed the pontifical fury by promising on behalf of his master to replace the Royal Judge by a Papal Legate.

Frederick spent the winter of 1235–6 at his castle of Hagenau, where a brilliant Court was assembled. Many foreigners came to witness his splendour, and many nobles from his Burgundian realm of Arles came to pay him homage. He was busily occupied, meanwhile, with warlike preparations, with a view not only to chastising the Lombards, but also to inflicting a salutary lesson upon his namesake, the Duke of Austria. This Prince, the most powerful and formidable noble of the Empire, had succeeded to the title six years before, and had maintained a sullen and childish antagonism to the Emperor without any justification. He had always refused to attend the Imperial Diets and was the only Prince who was absent from that of Mayence. He had embroiled

himself in war with the King of Hungary, a tributary monarch of the Empire, and had vexed the neighbouring Princes with his quarrelsome conduct. His other misdeeds were numerous. His subjects were groaning under his oppression. His mother had been despoiled of all her lands, threatened with barbarous mutilation, and had been compelled to seek refuge in Bohemia, from where she cried aloud to the Emperor for vengeance. He had outraged his sister and her husband, the Marquis of Meissen, by surprising the newly-wedded pair in bed and taking advantage of their helpless position to wrest from them a renunciation of the dowry which he had agreed to pay to the bride. He was also accused of having formed an alliance with the Lombard rebels. Frederick summoned him for the last time to repair to Hagenau and answer for his many offences, but he refused to appear. He was accordingly judged in his absence by a Council of Princes and deprived of all his honours.

Fortunately for the Duke of Austria, Frederick was at this time occupied with the approaching Lombard campaign, and could neither lead a punitive expedition against the rebel himself nor despatch a great army against him. Such forces as he was able to spare, however, advanced into Austria and, with the help of the Duke's oppressed subjects, subdued the whole Duchy, with the exception of a few strong castles. The Duke himself held out in his fortress of Neustadt until the April of 1237, and then, emboldened by the Emperor's absence in Italy and by the death of the Bishop of Bamberg,

who was conducting the campaign against him, he emerged from his retirement and won a great victory over the Imperial troops. He was able later to make his peace with the Emperor, when Frederick was in the throes of conflict with his other enemies.

Meanwhile Gregory was becoming alarmed by the Emperor's evident determination to inflict a summary punishment upon the Lombard League. The Christmas of 1235, which Frederick had named as the latest date upon which he would accept the submission of the League, had passed without any success attending Gregory's half-hearted efforts for peace. He then endeavoured to distract Frederick's attention by new efforts to arouse a Crusade. Although the truce which the Emperor had made in Palestine did not expire until 1239, the Pope declared that preparations should now be commenced for another attempt to expel the Moslems from the Holy Land. Frederick replied to this declaration by a most diplomatic manifesto. "Italy is my heritage," he said, "and all the world knows it. To covet other men's property and to give up my own would be sinful, especially as the disrespectful insolence of the Italians has provoked me. Moreover, I am a Christian and am ready to overcome the foes of the Cross. Heresies have sprung up and are growing thick in Italy, which abounds in arms, horses and wealth, as all the world knows."

This insistence on the prevalence of heresy in Northern Italy, which was notorious throughout Europe, placed the Pope in a difficult position, for unless he helped the

Emperor in his campaign against the heretics, he exposed the insincerity of his zeal for orthodoxy. If he actually lent assistance to the Lombards, he proclaimed to all Christendom that he placed the temporal interests of his office above the spiritual welfare of Christianity. On the other hand, if he gave countenance to the cause of the Emperor, he helped to destroy his last rampart against the Imperial power. There was, however, no doubt which alternative a mediæval Pope would chose. For the time being Gregory was content to work secretly against Frederick, but later he was to cast in his lot openly with the Lombards and ignore the taint of heresy with which they were besmirched in the eyes of Christendom.

We have an English churchman's opinion of Gregory's duplicity in the chronicle of Matthew Paris.[1] "The Pope," he writes, referring to Frederick's manifesto, "on hearing such profound reasonings, in order that he might not seem opposed to such incontrovertible arguments, pretended to give his consent; and that the Emperor might cross the mountains and enter Italy

[1] At this time the contemporary history of Matthew Paris, the Chronicler of St. Albans, first becomes available. It abounds with references to Frederick, and is especially valuable because it gives us a foreign opinion of the struggle between the Emperor and the Pope. Paris is perhaps the most impartial contemporary authority we have on a question which, even to our own day, has excited the most violent prejudices of historical writers. As an ecclesiastic he is shocked by the Emperor's attitude towards religion and by his lack of respect for the ancient privileges of the Church. As a patriot he resents the Papal extortions in England. His views are thus tempered by two opposing influences.

according to his purpose, his Holiness promised, without fail, as far as he was able, to afford his paternal assistance in every necessity. The Milanese, not without reason fearing the Emperor's terrible anger, sent to the Pope asking advice and effectual assistance from him; and he, after receiving a large sum of money with a promise of more, sent them much relief and assistance, to the injury of the Emperor: and this seemed incredible and contrary to everyone's opinion, that in such case of necessity the father should be converted into a step-father."

Much correspondence passed between Frederick and Gregory before the Italian campaign commenced, and on Gregory's side it frequently reached an acrimonious tone. The Emperor on one occasion inferred that the Pope's own conscience must reproach him for a certain act. "You have no business," replied Gregory, "to pry into the secrets of our conscience; our Judge is in Heaven." The priests of Christ, he declared, were the fathers and masters of all faithful Kings. Christian Emperors must submit themselves not merely to the supreme Pontiff, but to all other Bishops. Constantine had realised that the Pope ought to be endowed with temporal sovereignty and had bestowed the Western Empire on the Popes, transferring his own throne to Greece. The Popes had delegated the Empire to Charlemagne and his successors. The Apostolic See was the judge of the whole world and could be judged by none save God. The Emperor must beware of the doom of Uzziah and the tribe of Kohath, who were smitten

for laying hands upon the Ark. Frederick replied to this amazing piece of arrogance and to the other Papal missives in a tone of moderation and reason. He had no wish to precipitate the inevitable rupture by allowing a just rein to his indignation.

Chapter IX

THE CONQUEROR

IN July, 1236, the Emperor's warlike preparations for the chastisement of the Lombards were completed. The response of Germany to his call to arms was disappointing in the extreme: either she had declined greatly in martial enthusiasm since the days of Barbarossa, or the continued absence of Frederick had cooled the ardour of loyalty which had been given to his grandsire. In spite of their recent promises at the Diet of Mayence, none of the Princes appeared in person to follow their Kaiser into Italy. Many of them no doubt had heard their fathers tell of how the Lombard League had overthrown the might of Germany on the field of Legnano, and were unwilling to invite a similar disaster. It was therefore with only a force of seventeen hundred knights and their attendants, numbering in all about five thousand men, that Frederick crossed the Alps and joined his lieutenant Eccelin at Verona.

The Lombards had assembled in force to give battle to the invading Germans, and were encamped not far distant from Verona, at Montechiari. An unexpected and unusual spirit of caution, however, prevailed in their ranks when they heard that the Emperor had decided

to march out against them. A venerable and influential citizen of Milan cooled their ardour by the following oration: "Hear me, noble citizens. The Emperor is at hand in great power and with a large army, and he, as is known to the whole world, is our lord. If this lamentable struggle should take place, irreparable harm will arise from it; for if we are victorious we shall obtain a reproachful and bloody victory over our lord, but if we are conquered, he will destroy our name and that of our people and city for ever, and we shall be a disgrace to every nation. Since therefore in every event it is dishonourable and dangerous to proceed further in a hostile manner, I consider it a wise plan to return to our city, where, if he chooses to attack us, it will be lawful for us to repel force with force; and whether he allows us to make peace with him, or compels us to drive him from our territory by force, our city will be preserved and our good name will be unimpaired." These counsels of prudence were accepted by the men of Milan and the other citizens of the League, and the whole force dispersed and returned to their homes.

Frederick's force was now strengthened by detachments from the Ghibelline cities of Parma, Reggio and Modena, and he marched westwards, laying waste the lands of Mantua and capturing rebel castles on the way. At Cremona, however, he received news which caused him quickly to retrace his steps. Azzo, the Marques of Este and lord of Vicenza, was a bitter enemy of Eccelin de Romano and the head of the Guelfs in the Trevisan March. As soon as the Emperor had withdrawn

from the neighbourhood of Verona, Azzo gathered the men of Este, Vicenza and Padua together, and besieged Eccelin in Verona. Eccelin sent messengers to the Emperor at Cremona, beseeching him to come to his assistance and save the city from destruction. Frederick was not slow to answer to his call. "In wrath he flew through the air," wrote the wondering chroniclers. In one day and night he covered the distance between Cremona and Verona, sixty miles as the crow flies, urging his men over rough roads in a forced march which was unparalleled in his age. The Guelfs, hearing of his miraculous approach, fled incontinently to seek refuge in their cities; but Frederick maintained his extraordinary speed and actually reached Vicenza before the fugitives of that city under Azzo had returned. The Emperor offered to spare the lives and property of the townsmen if they would surrender peaceably but they refused. The walls were then taken by storm and the wretched populace subjected to all the horrors that accompanied the taking of a city in mediæval Italy. Azzo and his warriors arrived back to find their town in flames.

From Vicenza the Emperor was called back into Germany in November, but he left behind him able lieutenants, Eccelin de Romano and a German captain named Gebhardt, to continue the war. The success of his arms induced several rebels to forsake their cause and make their peace with him. Salinguerra, the tyrant of Ferrara, brought that city over to the Imperial allegiance. Azzo of Este turned his coat on condition

that his lands should be free from taxation. Padua was persuaded to make peace by the capture of two hundred of her knights, and came under the heavy yoke of Eccelin.

The triumph of the Imperial cause urged Gregory to more sincere efforts to bring the Lombards to submission. Hermann von Salza, who was doing his utmost to influence his Kaiser on the side of peace, sent a warning letter to the Papal Legates in Lombardy. "You will see that if peace is to be made," he wrote, "an assembly of the Lombards must be instantly convoked. Cæsar will not delay at Verona as he did last year, nor will the words of the Lombards detain him if the swords and lances of the Germans are free. He will let loose the wrath of his men the instant of his arrival if peace be not made. The treaty would be glorious in the sight of God and man. . . . There are many tokens that the Lord Emperor will not quit Lombardy either for summer or winter until he brings this business to an honourable end." The Legates, however earnest their intentions, failed to arrange the treaty. The Lombards were a stiff-necked generation and refused to agree to the Emperor's demands for an unconditional surrender, which would deprive them of the freedom they had wrung from Barbarossa at the Peace of Constance.

In September, 1237, the Imperial Eagles again crossed the Alps, and Frederick left Germany, never to return. His Empress accompanied him into Northern Italy, for he meant to stay there until he had crushed his enemies into the dust. From his Kingdom he had summoned ten thousand of the Saracen soldiers whom he had

settled at Lucera, and this formidable force, together with men from Apulia and Tuscany, joined him at Verona. From there he advanced to Mantua and circled the city with his army. The citizens, more wise than the men of Vicenza, submitted to him after a siege of a few days. They swore homage to the Emperor, renounced all connection with the Lombard League, and undertook to supply him with provisions while he prosecuted the siege of Brescia. In return they were taken under the Imperial protection and allowed to retain many of their ancient privileges.

Frederick now marched into the territory of Brescia at the head of an army composed of 7000 Saracens, 2000 Germans, 500 knights under Eccelin's leadership, and several bodies of soldiery from the neighbouring Ghibelline towns. Brescia called to her allies for succour, and a force of 6000 armoured knights, with their complement of light-armed troops, recruited from Milan, Piacenza, Alessandria, Vercelli, Novara and Lodi, crossed the Oglio and arrived at the threatened city. From there they marched southwards and took up a position in the marshlands of Manerbio, on the bank of a muddy and impassable stream. The Emperor was encamped some miles to the south at Pontevico, and vainly endeavoured to induce the Lombards to vacate their unassailable position by challenging them to fight on whatsoever ground they should choose. The two armies remained idle for a fortnight, until Frederick resolved to resort to stratagem to tempt the enemy from their position. He accordingly disseminated the report that he was about

to retire to Cremona and take up his winter quarters there. A large portion of his force was disbanded to lend colour to the rumour, and with the remainder, a picked body of 10,000 men, he crossed the Oglio and took the southern road to Cremona. After advancing a few miles in this direction, however, he turned sharply to the north-

west and encamped twenty-five miles further up the river, at Soncino.

The Lombards meanwhile, as soon as Frederick left Pontevico, apparently for Cremona, had also marched northwards on their homeward way, and on the night of November 26th they encamped at Palazzalo, which was some eighteen miles to the north of Soncino and on the opposite bank of the river. Little dreaming that the Emperor was so near, and that all the fords of the Oglio

were closely watched, they resumed their homeward march towards Milan on the morning of the 27th and fell into the Emperor's trap. As soon as his scouts signalled to him that the enemy were crossing the river, Frederick executed one of his rapid marches and burst upon them from the shelter of a wood near Cortenuova, at which place their vanguard had entrenched a position for the night's encampment. The false security of the Lombard army was first dispelled by the sudden appearance of a knight mounted on a white horse, who shouted out: "Be ready, for the Emperor is going to give you battle." Then the Imperial trumpets sounded and the light-armed Saracen bowmen poured their arrows into the Lombard ranks. A desperate struggle ensued until Frederick appeared at the head of the main body of his troops, when the Lombards retreated and formed up again under the walls of Cortenuova, around the cherished Carroccio, the standard of Milan. Frederick pushed on over a field strewn with corpses and dotted with riderless horses, and launched his heavy troops against the clustered cavalry and infantry of the now rallied foe.

For many hours the conflict raged furiously, but the Imperial troops, fighting under the eye of their lord, gradually hewed their way towards the Carroccio. The fall of darkness brought the combat to an end and Frederick's troops lay down to rest, thinking to complete the defeat of the enemy at dawn. But in the dead of night the Lombards stole furtively away, leaving 10,000 of their number either dead or prisoners in the Emperor's

hands. Pieter Tiepoli, the Podesta of Milan, was among the captives. The Archbishop of Milan disappeared altogether. The cross which surmounted the Carroccio was found amidst a crowd of wagons left by the fugitives. "Who can describe the heaps of corpses or the number of captives?" writes Peter de Vinea. "God, a just Judge, had at last regard to the rights of the Emperor and overthrew the pride of the Lombards: they lost their Carroccio and their Podesta: each of our men slew as many as he would and took as many as he would. Cæsar himself smote all foes with his own hands; the Germans dyed their swords in blood; the happy knights of the Kingdom fought wonderfully by the side of their Prince; the warriors of Pavia avenged themselves thoroughly on the Milanese; the loyal Cremonese satiated their axes with blood; the Saracens emptied their quivers. Never in any war were so many corpses piled up; had not night come on suddenly, none of the enemy would have fled from Cæsar's hands."

The battle was a triumph for Frederick's generalship. The Milanese chronicler, forgetting that at Pontevico Frederick had challenged the Lombards to an open combat on ground of their own choosing, grumbles at the Emperor's stratagem. "You lay hid like a robber in a cave," he complains; "you never gave us warning; you set upon us when we were unarmed. Think not that you could overcome one band! Though you did take our Carroccio, left stuck in the mud, you have no cause to boast! Ah, wait the events of future years!" It was indeed a disastrous defeat for the rebels. Over half

their army and all their horses and oxen and wagons and tents had fallen into the enemy's hands. Legnano was at last avenged.

Frederick made a triumphal entry into Cremona. His great elephant was harnessed to the Carroccio, on which the captive Podesta was bound. Behind him marched a vast crowd of prisoners of all ranks. The Podesta was executed soon after, which, since he was a rebel, was no violation of the rules of war. Nevertheless it was a great mistake, for he was the son of the Doge of Venice, and from henceforth that powerful state was numbered among Frederick's enemies. The Milanese meanwhile gave themselves over to blaspheming the God who had deserted them. The crucifix was suspended by its heels in the Cathedral, and the churches and altars were polluted and defiled. They sent their deputies to sue for peace: they would pay a large indemnity, give hostages, and admit an Imperial Captain within their walls, if the Emperor would promise to work no harm to the city. But Frederick would have nothing but an unconditional surrender, and the deputies returned to Milan.

The victorious Emperor spent Christmas at Lodi. So far his operations against the Lombards had been marked by brilliant success, and the League was rapidly dissolving. With the exception of Bologna, Brescia, Piacenza, Milan and Alessandria, every state in Northern Italy came to lay their tribute at his feet. Foreign nobles and warriors came to fight under the standard of one who had shown himself to be a great captain in

war. Gregory for the moment was overawed into silence, and the citizens of Rome rejoiced to receive the Carroccio of Milan, which the Emperor had sent them as a trophy of his victories. The year 1238 opened with the brightest prospects, and the birth of a son to the Empress Isabella in February seemed a further sign of divine favour. The child was called Henry, although the elder son of that name was still alive in his Apulian prison.

Frederick now began to gather a still more formidable armament for the final overthrow of the five cities which still held out against him. The tributary King of Hungary was asked to lead his soldiers to assist in the good work. "Kings ought to help one another," wrote Frederick. "We have chastised the Milanese with a rod of iron; had we not appeared, the bad example of rebellion would have spread into far countries. We have proclaimed a Diet, which is to be held at Verona on the 1st of May, to which we have summoned our son Conrad with a great body of men from Germany, and all our Princes, to crush the rebellion for ever. To the end that the might of Kings may come to the help of the Imperial host, we earnestly beg you to send to us in Italy a number of knights armed with crossbows. You yourself should lead them as becomes your royal honour."

Conrad crossed the Alps with a great number of Prelates, Princes and knights. If the Germans had answered tardily to the Emperor's summons at the commencement of the war, they were ready enough to join him now, when his star was in the ascendant and there seemed every prospect of victory and rich plunder for his

followers. Every portion of his vast dominions was represented in his army. The Prelates of Arles and Marseilles, the Count of Provence, the nobles of Germany and Sicily, mingled with troops from Rome, Tuscany and almost every part of Northern Italy. Nor was this host composed merely of his own subjects. The Sultan Kamel sent troops to swell the ranks of Frederick's Saracen soldiery. Vataces, the Eastern Emperor, sent him a body of men. Knights from France and Spain came to serve under his triumphant eagles. Henry of England despatched a hundred knights and a store of gold to his brother-in-law, and these Englishmen, under the captaincy of Henry de Trubeville, earned the Emperor's special praise during the campaign.

Milan, terrified at these vast preparations, made a still more humble plea for peace. She would swear allegiance to Frederick as her true and natural Lord : she would give all her gold and silver into his hands and burn all her banners at his feet : she would furnish an army of 10,000 soldiers to follow him to another Crusade into Palestine ; she would do all these things and more if he would promise to forgo his revenge and spare the city and its inhabitants. But Frederick would grant no terms : she must surrender absolutely to his pleasure. Either his pride demanded such an unconditional submission or he intended to wreak a signal and final punishment on the rebellious city when she bowed her head to his power. The Milanese chose to regard the latter as the explanation of his refusal and resolved to die in the defence of their city rather than

submit to his tender mercies. "We fear your cruelty," they declared, "for we know it by experience; we had rather die under our shields by sword or spear than by treachery, starvation and fire." Frederick would have been well advised to refrain from driving the rebels to desperation; but he remembered all the sins of Milan against his house and hardened his heart.

In the first week of July, 1238, when all the varied companies that constituted his army had collected at Cremona, he held a council of war to consider at which of the five cities to strike first. Amongst all the captains who gathered to the debate, the voice of Eccelin de Romano prevailed. "God's Providence," he said, "orders all men to obey the Roman Empire. Strike the snake on the head and the rebels will come to your footstool. I advise you to begin with Brescia first, and thus you will have peace. I will fight my best for you, I who have placed the hope of my life under the shield of your protection." Accordingly in the beginning of August the Emperor marched northwards to Brescia and drew his army around the city walls.

Chapter X

THE SECOND EXCOMMUNICATION

UNTIL the year 1238, Frederick's career had been marked by a long succession of triumphs and marred by no signal disasters. He had secured the Imperial Crown, had erected a despotic monarchy in his Kingdom, had led a Crusade more fruitful in its results than any which had preceded it, had subdued for awhile the aggressive violence of the Pope, had overthrown with ease the rebellion of his son, and had commenced a war against the Lombards which seemed destined to make his lordship supreme in Northern Italy. The siege of Brescia, however, stands out among the events of his life as the turning point in his fortunes. From henceforth he was to know the bitterness of defeat and disaster, of reverses which, though never irremediable, were to arrest the expansion of his power and to render it subject to those fluctuations from which it had hitherto been remarkably free. The star of his fortunes was henceforth to hover uncertainly between wax and wane, until finally the inevitable eclipse of death extinguished its light for ever.

The walled city of Brescia, against which, in the beginning of August, 1238, he led his vast and cosmopolitan army, might well fear that a terrible vengeance

was about to overtake it. But a Lombard city at bay was no easy prey. Its citizens, hoping for no mercy if they surrendered to their implacable lord, resolved to die gloriously in the defence of their homes rather than submit meekly to ignominious and fearful punishment. They had within their walls the most skilful military engineer of the day, one Calamandrino, who had been arrested on his way to the Imperial camp and offered the alternative of death or service in the Brescian cause. He chose to live, and his wooden towers and bulwarks, his mangonels and trebuchets, defeated all attempts to take the city by sudden storm or by the steady battering down of its walls.

The siege was prosecuted in no gentle manner. Some captured Brescians were bound to the Emperor's moving towers to avert the storm of arrows, stones and fire-balls with which they were assailed. The Brescians in turn bound their prisoners to crosses and suspended them along the walls where the showers of missiles were thickest. Constant sallies were made by the besieged which, owing to the lack of vigilance in the Imperial ranks, were frequently attended with success, and Frederick himself narrowly escaped capture on one occasion.

Two months passed and the city still maintained its defence with undiminished vigour. Frederick grew impatient of the delay, and it became increasingly difficult to find food and forage for his great army. Finally he raised the siege in disgust, disbanded the greater part of his troops, and contented himself with a visit to a few

of the loyal towns who would soothe his ruffled pride by their ovations.

He would have been wise, after this reverse, to have abstained from any action which might provoke the Pope to take advantage of his temporary eclipse. Instead he proceeded to add more fuel to the fire which was smouldering in Gregory's breast. He arranged a marriage between his favourite natural son, Enzio, and Adelasia, the Queen of Sardinia, and despatched Enzio with a body of knights to the island, where the wedding was consummated. This Adelasia was a widow, and her former husband had paid homage to the Pope for his realm. Frederick, however, asserted that Sardinia was an old territory of the Empire, and his son naturally supported the Imperial claim. Gregory protested in vain. "I have sworn," declared Frederick, "as the world well knows, to recover the scattered parts of the Empire, and this I will not be slow to fulfil." Gregory immediately began to prepare for the offensive and entered into a league with Venice and Genoa. The Guelfs throughout Northern Italy were stirred into renewed activity by the Papal Legates. The truce between Pope and Emperor had come to its inevitable end.

On Palm Sunday, 1239, Gregory assembled his Cardinals in the Church of St. Peter and once again pronounced the awful sentence of excommunication against his enemy. "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, we excommunicate and anathematise the Emperor Frederick." Nine charges were repeated against

Frederick which had been published some months before. He was accused of stirring up sedition in Rome against the Pope. The old offence of oppressing the Sicilian Church was again recounted. He had thrown obstacles in the way of the recovery of the Holy Land and had rejected the arbitration of the Pope in the affairs of Lombardy. These and many other accusations the Emperor had already refuted in calm and dignified terms, but the Pope chose to ignore his denials.

Frederick was at Padua when the news of his excommunication came to him. For a time he restrained his anger. He declared his amazement at so enormous a punishment for crimes he had never committed. Peter de Vinea delivered an eloquent discourse on the word of Ovid : " Punishment when merited is to be borne with patience, but when it is undeserved, with sorrow." " No Emperor," he declared, " since the days of Charlemagne, has been more just, gentle and magnanimous, or has given so little cause for the hostility of the Church." To the Roman citizens Frederick wrote in words of reproach. " Was there not one amongst you," he asked, " to rise in our behalf and speak a word for us, after all our endeavours to raise the Roman name to its old renown ? Without your connivance our blasphemer would never have dared to carry his insolence so far. If you are slack in defending our honour we shall withdraw our favour from the city of Rome."

The letter in which the Emperor vindicated himself before the Princes of Christendom was couched in less

restrained terms. "Cast your eyes around, lift up your ears, O sons of men, that ye may hear and behold the universal scandal of the world, the dissensions of nations, and lament the utter extinction of justice. Wickedness has gone out from the Elders of Babylon, who hitherto appeared to rule the people, whilst judgment is turned into bitterness, the fruits of justice into wormwood. Sit in judgment, ye Princes, ye People take cognizance of our cause." The Pope's duplicity and unreasoning hostility, his endeavours to seduce Frederick's subjects from their allegiance and his encouragement of the Lombard rebels are then set forth at considerable length. Notwithstanding the Emperor's refutation of the charges made against him the Pope had proceeded to excommunicate him, though many of the Cardinals, if report spoke truly, had remonstrated. "Be it that we had offended the Pope by some public and singular insult, how violent and inordinate these proceedings, as though, if he had not vomited forth the wrath that boiled within him, he must have burst! We grieve from our reverence for our Mother the Church! Could we accept the Pope, thus our avowed enemy, as an equitable judge to arbitrate in our dispute with Milan; Milan, favoured by the Pope, though by the testimony of all religious men, swarming with heretics? We hold Pope Gregory as an unworthy Vicar of Christ, an unworthy successor of St. Peter; not in disrespect to his office, but of his person, who sits in his court like a merchant weighing out dispensations for gold, himself signing, writing the bulls, doubtless counting the money. He is unworthy

of his place; we therefore appeal to a Council. He has but one real cause of enmity against me, that I refused to marry to his niece my son Enzio, now King of Sardinia. But ye, O Kings and Princes of the earth, lament not only for us but for the whole Church; for her head is sick; her prince is like a roaring lion; in the midst of her sits a frantic prophet, a man of falsehood, a polluted priest! He wishes to overthrow Cæsar first; he will then tread down the rest of the Princes of the earth."

For the benefit of the lower clergy and common people, who would be most readily moved by scriptural allusions, a strangely-worded circular was sent around the nations. "The Chief Priest and the Pharisees," it ran, "have met in Council against their Lord, against the Roman Emperor. 'What shall we do,' say they, 'for this man is triumphing over all his enemies? If we let this man go, he will subdue Lombardy, and will come and take away our place and nation; he will give the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth to other husbandmen and will miserably destroy us. Let us smite him quickly with our tongues; let our arrows be no more concealed, but go forth; so go forth as to strike; so strike as to wound; so be he wounded as to fall before us, so fall as never to rise again; and then will he see what profit he has in his dreams.' The Pharisees, sitting in Moses's seat, have openly perverted judgment and have bound an innocent and just Prince. This Father of Fathers, who is called the servant of servants, shutting out all justice, is become a deaf adder; refuses to hear

the vindication of the King of the Romans; hurls malediction into the world as a stone is hurled from a sling; and sternly and heedless of all consequences, exclaims, 'What I have written, I have written.' The Master of Masters said not 'Take arms and shield, the arrow and the sword,' but 'Peace be with you.' Thou, the Pope, art ever seeking something to devour, nor can the whole world appease thy craving maw. Peter said unto the lame man: 'Silver and Gold have I none,' but thou, if the heap of money which thou adorest begins to dwindle, immediately begins to limp with the lame man, seeking anxiously what is of this world. Let our Mother Church then bewail that the shepherd of the flock is become a ravening wolf, eating the fatlings of the flock; neither binding up the broken, nor bringing the wanderer home to the fold; but a lover of schism, the head and author of offence, the father of deceit. O grief! rarely dost thou expend the vast treasures of the Church on the poor! But, as Anagni bears witness, thou hast commanded a wonderful mansion, as it were the Palace of the Sun, to be built, forgetful of Peter who long had nothing but his net. 'All power is from God,' writes the Apostle; 'whoso resists the power resists the authority of God.' Either receive then, into the bosom of the Church her elder son, who without guile incessantly demands pardon; otherwise the strong lion, who feigns sleep, with his terrible roar will bring fat bulls from the ends of the earth; will plant justice, take over the rule of the Church, plucking up and destroying the horns of the proud!"

More lurid and violent still was Gregory's reply. "Out of the sea is a beast arisen, whose name is all over written 'Blasphemy'; he has the feet of a bear, the jaws of a ravening lion, the mottled limbs of a panther. He opens his mouth to blaspheme the name of God; and shoots his poisoned arrows against the tabernacle of the Lord, and the saints that dwell therein. This Beast is striving to grind everything to pieces with its iron claws and teeth. . . . Look carefully into the head, the middle, and the lower parts of this Beast Frederick, called the Emperor, and consider the truth. . . . We count it an honour to be abused by such a wicked man; we had rather not be praised by him. . . . Now weigh in the scales the benefits which the Church has heaped upon this Dragon. She covered him with a cloak in his tender years, snatched him from the toils of the hunters and raised him to the Empire. She gave him moreover the Kingdom of Jerusalem and upheld him against the rebellion of his son Henry. Yet this staff of the impious, this hammer of the earth, has robbed, banished, and imprisoned the Sicilian clergy, and has given the Churches over to adulterous embraces. He has built mosques on the ruins of churches and has forbidden the preaching of the Crusade. He has taken from the nobles their castles and has forced those brought up in crimson to lie in the mire. He has reduced the barons and knights of Sicily to the state of slaves; most part of the people there have no beds, wear sackcloth, and eat coarse bread made of millet. This man out of thirst for gold has reduced the Kingdom of Sicily to ashes and sold justice.

He has built schools for the perdition of souls.[1] . . . This man who delights in being called the forerunner of Antichrist, has now openly thrown aside the mask; he says we have no power to excommunicate him; thus, like a heretic, denying the right to bind and loose, which our Lord gave unto Peter. This pestilent King maintains, to use his own words, that the world has been deceived by three impostors: Jesus Christ, Moses and Mahomet; that two of these died in honour and the third was hanged upon a tree. Even more he has asserted distinctly and loudly that those are fools who aver that God, the Omnipotent Creator of the World, was borne of a virgin. . . . Cease to wonder that he has drawn against us the dagger of calumny, for he has risen up to extirpate from the earth the name of the Lord. Rather, to repel his lies by simple truth, to refute his sophisms by the arguments of holiness, we exorcise the head, the body and the extremities of this Beast, who is none other than the Emperor Frederick."

This furious and unveracious tirade was spread abroad throughout Europe by the Franciscan and Dominican friars, who were the invaluable spies, agents and preachers of the Papacy. They could influence the common mass of people, which the Emperor could not reach, and exercised a powerful sway over the superstitions of the ignorant. Of how the Pope's accusations were regarded in England we can read in Matthew Paris. "This letter," he writes, "struck fear and dread as well as astonishment to the hearts of those of the true faith,

[1] This apparently refers to the University of Naples!

and rendered the Emperor's letter suspected, though the latter contained probable facts, and also re-established the minds of many who had formerly been in a wavering state. And, had it not been that the Roman avarice had alienated the devotion of people from the Pope more than was expedient and proper, the whole world would have been exasperated by this letter, and would have risen unanimously against the Emperor as the open enemy of Christ and the Church. But alas ! many sons have become estranged from their father, and, adhering to the cause of the Emperor, they asserted that inextinguishable hatred, now become hardened between them, excited the aforesaid strife and invectives. The Pope said unjustly that he loved the said Frederick and advanced his interests at the beginning of his promotion ; for all this was done out of hatred to Otho, whom the Church, with Frederick's assistance, prosecuted to death because, according to his oath, he endeavoured by force to assemble together the scattered portions of the Empire, as the present Emperor Frederick is also endeavouring to do ; wherefore, by doing this, Frederick fought for the Church, and fought so again in Palestine, and the Roman Church was more bound by obligations to him than the Emperor was to the Roman Church. The Church in the West, especially the orders of religious men, and the Church of England which was of all others most devoted to God, felt the daily oppressions of the Roman Church, but it had never as yet felt any from the Emperor. The people, too, added, ' What is the meaning of this ? In times past

the Pope accused the Emperor of believing in Mahomet and the Saracenic law, more than in Christ and the Christian faith ; but now in his abusive letter he accuses him (horrible to relate) of calling Mahomet, as well as Jesus and Moses, an impostor. In his letters, the Emperor writes humbly and in a Catholic manner of God, except that in this last one he derogates from the person of the Pope, not from the office, nor does he utter or support anything profane or heretical, as we know of as yet ; and he has not sent usurers or plunderers of our revenue amongst us.' And in this way a schism much to be dreaded rose amongst the people."

The Emperor, in his reply to Gregory's invective, also resorted to the Apocalypse for picturesque terms of abuse. " He, in name only the Pope, has called us the Beast that arose out of the sea, whose name was Blasphemy, spotted as the panther. We in turn aver that he is the beast of whom it is written, ' And there went out another horse that was red, and power was given to him that sat thereon to take away peace from the earth, that the living should slay each other.' For from the time of his accession this Father, not of mercies but of discords, not of consolation but of desolation, has plunged the whole world in bitterness. If we rightly interpret the words, he is the great Antichrist, who has deceived the world, the Antichrist of whom he declares us the forerunner. He is a second Balaam hired by money to curse us ; the prince of the princes of darkness who have abused the prophecies. He is the angel who issued from the abyss having the vials

of wormwood to waste earth and heaven. This false Vicar of Christ accuses us of saying that the world has been deceived by three Impostors. Far be such blasphemy from our lips, for we believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. But we believe that Mahomet's body is hanging in the air tormented by devils, and that his soul has been given to hell, since his works were dark and against the law of the Most High. We say that Moses was the friend of God and that he in now in heaven. In these and other matters our accuser has put forth lying and poisonous statements against us. . . . The Pope is jealous of our success in Lombardy; over this he groans. Let him confine himself to offering up the Host and to burning incense. We reverence the Church, but we disapprove of her ministers. Unless you can restrain our enemy, Augustus will be driven to revenge."

We have it from Matthew Paris that the following prophetic writing was actually found in the Pope's bedchamber. Who it was that had had the temerity to invade that sacred apartment on such a mission was never discovered, but doubtless it was the work of a secret partisan of the Emperor's among the Papal household. The Prophecy, expressed in Latin verse, ran thus :—

> "By stars, by flights of birds, by fate we see
> Of all the world one man shall hammer be.
> Rome totters, through a maze of errors led,
> And of the world shall cease to be the head."

Gregory, at any rate, attributed the authorship of the verses to Frederick, and replied in the following couplet :—

> "The fates, the Scripture, and your sins foretell
> Your doom; short life and everlasting hell."

So the war of words continued, waged on both sides with equal acrimony, but by Gregory with a far more wanton disregard of the truth than his opponent. Men throughout Christendom were amazed and bewildered by the furious controversy, but the mass of opinion was on the side of Frederick. Gregory sought in vain for foreign support. England which under its feeble King Henry, and under John before him, had allowed its wealth to be drained into the Papal coffers, became restive when required to furnish the Pope with money to prosecute his schemes against the Emperor. The Prelates flatly refused to accede to the demands of the Legate Otho. "The greedy avarice of Rome," they said, "has exhausted the English Church; it will not even give it breathing time; we can submit to no further exactions." The monasteries, more docile, yielded to Otho's extortions, but the sum thus collected fell far below Gregory's expectations.

In France he met with a still more severe rebuff. He endeavoured to secure the military alliance of St. Louis by offering to depose Frederick in favour of Louis' brother Robert. But the pious King received the tempting suggestion in the most inhospitable manner. "Whence this pride and audacity of the Pope," he

answered, "who thus presumes to disinherit and depose a King who has no superior, nor even an equal, among Christians? a King neither convicted by others, nor by his own confession, of the crimes laid to his charge. Even if those crimes were proved, no power could depose him but a general council. On his transgressions the judgment of his enemies is of no weight, and his deadliest enemy is the Pope. To us he has not only thus far appeared guiltless, he has been a good neighbour; we see no cause for suspicion either of his worldly loyalty or his Catholic faith. This we know, that he has fought valiantly for our Lord Jesus Christ both by sea and land. So much religion we have not found in the Pope, who endeavoured to confound and wickedly supplant him in his absence, while he was engaged in the cause of God. We do not wish to throw ourselves into such great dangers as to attack such a powerful Prince as this said Frederick, whom so many kingdoms would assist against us, and who would give their support in a just cause. If the Pope should conquer him by our means, or the help of others, he would trample on all the Princes of the world, assuming the horns of boasting and pride, since he had conquered the great Emperor Frederick."

The nobles of France also demonstrated in which direction their sympathies lay. They sent ambassadors to Frederick, informed him of the Pope's intentions to raise up a rival Emperor, and asked him formally to deny the charges of heresy brought against him. "May Jesus Christ grant that I never depart from the

faith of my ancestors," was Frederick's reply. "The Lord judge between me and the man who has thus defamed me before the world. The God of vengeance recompense him as he deserves. If you are prepared to make war against me, I will defend myself to the utmost of my power." "God forbid," answered the ambassadors, "that we should wage war on any Christian without just cause. To be the brother of the King of France is sufficient honour for the noble Robert."

In Germany the Papal machinations were received with a still more outspoken disdain. The intrusion of the Papal Legate Albert von Beham, a ferocious and venal cleric, aroused furious opposition against his master. "Let this Roman Priest feed his own Italians," cried one Prelate. "We who are set by God as dogs to watch our own folds will keep off all wolves in sheep's clothing." Still more audacious was the angry protest of the Archbishop of Salzburg: "Hildebrand, one hundred and seventy years ago, under the semblance of religion, laid the foundations of Antichrist. He who is the servant of servants would be the Lord of Lords. This accursed man, whom men are wont to call Antichrist, on whose contumelious forehead is written, 'I am God, I cannot err,' sits in the temple of God and pretends to universal dominion."

The lay Princes were no less hostile than their spiritual brethren. It was no light matter, they bade the Pope remember, to harass the Emperor of the Romans. As for his attempt to raise up another Emperor, it was beyond his right. His function was only to crown the

man whom they, the Princes, might choose. Even Frederick of Austria laughed the excommunication to scorn. The King of Bohemia sided with Gregory for a short time, and Otho of Bavaria was lured away from his allegiance by the perilous but tempting bait of the Imperial Crown. They offered, however, no serious menace to Frederick and the rest of Germany stood loyal.

The Emperor issued one more proclamation to the Princes, with the object of assuring them that his antagonism was directed not against the Church but its unworthy head. "Since my ancestors the Cæsars lavished wealth and dignity on the Popes, they have become the Emperor's most implacable enemies. Because I will not recognise his sole unlimited power and honour him more than God, he, himself the Antichrist, brands me, the truest friend of the Church, as a heretic. Who can wish more than I that the Christian community should resume its majesty, simplicity and peace; but this cannot be, until the fundamental evil, the ambition, the pride and prodigality of the Bishop of Rome be rooted up. I am no enemy of the priesthood; I honour the Priest, the humblest Priest, as a father, if he will keep aloof from secular affairs. The Pope cries out that I would root out Christianity, with force and by the sword. Folly! as if the Kingdom of God could be rooted out by force and by the sword; it is by evil lusts, by avarice and rapacity, that it is weakened, polluted, corrupted. Against these evils it is my mission of God to contend with the sword. I will give back to the sheep their

shepherd, to the people their bishop, to the world its spiritual father. I will tear the mask from the face of this wolfish tyrant, and force him to lay aside worldly affairs and earthly pomp, and tread in the holy footsteps of Christ."

Brave words these, and a high purpose; but that which one man thought to accomplish in his latter years the centuries have scarcely been able to fulfil.

Chapter XI

FIRE AND SWORD

THE rebels of Northern Italy now bound the red cross of the Crusader upon their arms, for Gregory had declared a Holy War against the Emperor and they were fighting in the cause of the Church. The open alliance of the Pope gave them renewed courage, and many of those who had joined Frederick during his successful campaign now renounced their allegiance. Azzo of Este and Alberic de Romano, the brother of Eccelin, raised the standard of rebellion in the Trevisan March and were supported by the gold of Venice. Bologna became the centre of disaffection in Romagna and induced Paul Traversaro to bring the city of Ravenna over to the side of the Guelfs. Even in his Kingdom of Arles sedition raised its head against the Emperor. Raymond Berenger, the Count of Provence, drove the Imperial Vicar from his dominions and made a covenant with the Pope whereby he promised military aid in the war against the excommunicate sovereign. But the Count of Toulouse and the great cities stood loyal, and Raymond's death a few months later deprived the Pope of a valuable ally.

In June, 1239, Frederick advanced into the territories of Bologna, ravaged her lands, burnt two of her strong

castles and captured a thousand of her soldiers. He then appointed his favourite son Enzio as his Vicar in Central Italy and himself returned to Cremona to carry on the war in Lombardy. During his absence the loyalists of Pavia had been defeated by the soldiers of Piacenza, but this reverse had been more than counterbalanced by the accession of Como, the gateway into Germany, which had revolted from the Milanese yoke and joined the Ghibellines. Milan was alive with martial activity and was preparing for a desperate defence in view of the Emperor's coming. Gregory of Montelengo, the Papal Legate, had taken up his abode there and had commanded even the clergy and friars to doff their vestments and buckle on the sword.

The campaign against Milan commenced in September, but it proved a failure. Frederick burned twenty Milanese towns and laid waste the countryside, but when he reached the walls of the great city itself he was forced to recognise that his armament was not strong enough to attack it with any hope of success. He then turned southwards to Piacenza, but here a torrential rain and a flooded river frustrated him, and in November he returned to Cremona.

He now decided to abandon awhile the fruitless operations against Milan and her Lombard allies and to turn his arms against the territories of the Church. Tuscany, which he traversed on his way southwards, gratified him by every evidence of loyalty. Pisa, the chief Imperial city of the province, invited him to spend Christmas within her walls and to put an end to the party

warfare of Conti and Visconti which was distracting her peace. He held his Court there in great state, and on Christmas Day, in contempt of the Papal excommunication, he heard Mass in the Cathedral. The citizens were then exhorted to abandon their quarrelsome factions. "There are many examples in history," he declared, "which prove that States are ruined only by their own divisions. You must live like good citizens and think only of the good of the Commonwealth. If you disobey, I shall be the first to overthrow your state; not from hatred, but because I do not wish to see it fall into the hands of others." The elders consented gladly to rigorous laws which he enacted against future disturbers of the peace.

From Pisa he proceeded to Arezzo and Cortona, and from thence entered the lands of the Church. The March of Ancona and the Duchy of Spoleto had been given to the Papacy by Frederick at his Coronation. On his departure for the Crusade, however, the hostility of Gregory had induced him to revoke the grant, but at the peace of San Germano he had again relinquished the provinces to the Papacy. The outbreak of renewed hostilities with Gregory had led to a second withdrawal of the gift, and while Frederick was engaged in Romagna and Lombardy, his son Enzio had made great headway against the Papal party in the March. Frederick now entered the Duchy of Spoleto and, avoiding the impregnable Guelf stronghold of Perugia, came to Foligno, where he met Enzio and was attended by the envoys of many cities which welcomed his coming.

Here an invitation reached him which emboldened him to strike yet more closely at the Papal dominions, and to threaten Gregory in his own Patrimony. Viterbo, the ancient enemy of Rome, besought the Emperor to bestow the favour of his presence upon her. His entry into Viterbo was the signal for a general revulsion of feeling in his favour, and city after city cast off its allegiance to the Pope until the Imperial sway spread to the very gates of Rome. Even the Eternal City itself prepared to welcome Gregory's enemy. "Let him come," the mob shouted when Frederick's envoys appeared; "let the Emperor come and receive the homage of his city."

Gregory was in dire peril and many of his Cardinals fled. But he was a man of high courage, and he well knew how fickle were the enthusiasms of the Roman populace. While the shouts of the mob were ringing in his ears he gathered his priests and acolytes around him, withdrew from their shrines the sacred relics, the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul and the wood of the True Cross, and bore them in solemn procession from the Lateran to St. Peter's. The weathercock temper of the people instantly veered round in his favour. They knelt before him in his progress through the streets. Every Church in the city was packed, and men, women, and children hastened to take the Cross and range themselves against the Emperor whom they had just prepared to welcome.

Frederick's hope of bearding Gregory in his lair was defeated by the unanimous hostility of the citizens.

Even if he might have contemplated a siege of the city, the exhausted condition of his war-chest rendered so great an undertaking impossible. He decided to return to his Kingdom and replenish his resources, and after a few minor operations, during which all captives who wore the Cross were either slain or branded, he withdrew from Viterbo and at the end of March re-entered his Kingdom after an absence of five years.

An effort was now made to put an end to this disastrous warfare. Hermann von Salza, who had striven so hard in the cause of peace, had died recently and Frederick had thus lost a loyal and valued friend. But the new Grand Master of the Teutonic Order journeyed to Rome on behalf of the Princes of Germany and urged Gregory to relax his uncompromising enmity to the Emperor. Gregory at first seemed inclined to welcome a suspension of hostilities which might pave the way for a more permanent settlement. Cardinal John Colonna was employed as the Papal ambassador to the Emperor and arranged a truce on the Pope's authority which did not include the Lombards in the amnesty which was to ensue. When Colonna arrived back at Rome, however, Gregory had been emboldened by the receipt of substantial and much needed sums of money, which had been extracted from the long-suffering clergy of England and France. He therefore refused to ratify a treaty which left the Emperor free to wreak his vengeance upon the Lombards and thus to destroy the chief bulwark of the Papacy.

Colonna was commanded to return to the Emperor

and insist on an amendment of the agreement which should protect the Lombards : if the Emperor refused the truce was to be annulled. But the Cardinal had no taste for such a mission. " Far be it," he said, " that there should be such fickleness of speech in the mouth of so great a man and that these words should be sent to such a great Prince, especially by the mouth of Cardinals, who are not common persons ; and to this fickle and faithless plan I will on no account consent, but firmly oppose it." The Pope's ready anger was aroused by this plain speaking. " I no longer consider you as my Cardinal," he said. " And I," replied Colonna, " will no longer esteem you as my Pope." The negotiations for peace failed since Frederick refused to include the Lombards in the truce, and the haughty Cardinal, who was the Pope's ablest general, joined Frederick's cause and carried over the greater portion of his troops. " The Book of Kings," wrote Frederick to Colonna, " must now be your study; you must have nought to do with Leviticus and the Song of Songs. We have found in you a man after our own heart and we shall honour and love you accordingly."

Frederick stayed some four months in his Kingdom, regulating its affairs and preparing for another campaign. Many ecclesiastics who had shown their sympathy with the Pope too plainly were banished, and the mischievous Franciscan and Dominican friars were everywhere subjected to persecution or driven from the realm.

In May the news arrived that Alessandria, one of the

five Lombard cities which had persisted in their defiance of the Emperor after the battle of Cortenuova, had changed its politics and espoused the Imperial cause. A month later unwelcome tidings came of the capture of Ferrara by the Guelfs. The city had been brought over to Frederick's side by its tyrant Salinguerra in 1236. It was now besieged by the Venetians, the Bolognese, and detachments from various Lombard towns under the Papal Legate Montelengo. Salinguerra defended it for four months, but in June was forced to yield and did homage to the Legate. Montelengo promised to spare the life and property of the old warrior and his men, but the promise was deliberately broken and Salinguerra ended his days in a Venetian prison.

In July the Emperor commenced another campaign and led his Apulian army through the Anconitan March to Ravenna, where he was joined by Enzio. This city, which had cast off its allegiance to him after his excommunication in the previous year, was ill-prepared for defence, for its great captain, Paul Traversaro, had died four days before the Emperor's arrival. Its citizens surrendered after a siege of a few days. They besought Frederick's mercy and bade him remember their long allegiance and loyalty before their revolt. Frederick listened to their entreaties and punished only the ringleaders of the unfaithful party. The populace was spared and the city garrisoned with the Imperial troops.

Frederick now cast his eyes on Bologna, which was his most formidable enemy in Central Italy. Once this

city was crushed he would be practically the undisputed master of the Romagna. But if he marched directly against Bologna he would leave Faenza in his rear, and Faenza was a sturdy and ancient enemy. He accordingly decided to demolish this town before proceeding to the greater task of reducing Bologna. In his letters he declared that this would merely be a matter of a few days, but he sadly underestimated the city's power of resistance, for Faenza, though small, was the most strongly fortified of any town of the Romagna.

His army was now increased by the arrival of men from Germany, Tuscany, and some Ghibelline towns of Lombardy. Rudolf of Hapsburg brought a band of sturdy Swiss mountaineers to serve under the Imperial banner, himself all unconscious of the destiny that had marked him out as Frederick's successor to an Empire from which the present glories were to have departed. Frederick's illusion about the easy capture of Faenza was quickly dispelled, and gave place to a firm resolution to subdue the city by a steady blockade when more active methods had failed. "Faenza," he wrote to the Justiciaries of his Kingdom, "is the one hindrance to check the wheel of our conquest. We must have it when the spring comes and Bologna as well. Our presence will not be needed afterwards; the war is coming to an end; so we know you will not object to give us aid." Money was urgently required and the long-suffering Kingdom had to supply the want. "We have stinted ourselves rather than lay unwonted burdens upon you.

The subsidy we now expect is less than usual and it is to be raised from the Churches, the Clergy, the barons and our domains."

When October came the men of Faenza fondly hoped to see the Imperial army strike its camp and abandon the siege until the winter was past; for such was the almost invariable custom in Italian warfare. But Frederick resolved to endure the rigours of the season. "We shall not stir," he wrote to the King of France, "either for winter or for hail or for rain, until we have utterly confounded our rebels." The besieged were alarmed by the sight of a regular city of huts which the Emperor was building to shelter his army. Food was running short and many attempted to leave the town, while the women and children were driven out since they were useless in the work of defence. Frederick, however, would allow no one to pass through his lines. "Let them go back to their husbands and masters, whom I denounce as guilty of treason before God and man; they shall have no mercy since they showed none to me." He recalled the injuries they had done to him in past years. "They murdered one of my knights who was clad in Imperial armour, thinking they had killed me their Lord. They also mutilated the palfrey upon which my mother was riding through their city, venting their rage on a brute beast: they paid no respect to her Royal rank or even to her sex." The women returned to their homes and an embassy of aged men came to the Emperor and asked for leave to quit the city. "Since they would not in prosperity return to their allegiance,"

he said, " I will give no heed to their cry in the time of trouble."

Even his allies were disturbed by the continuation of the siege during the winter months. Como sent envoys to him and requested that her soldiers who were serving under him might be allowed to return. " They will return to you in our company," he replied, " when we have gained over Faenza the victory that we shall without doubt speedily win." " Let not our lieges live at home in ease," he wrote to the Florentines, " when our person is toiling in a cuirass with frost and ice around." Frederick might be a sybarite by choice, but his senses never gained an ascendancy over his will, and when the need arose he could cast off his luxurious habits and lead the rigorous and simple life of an old campaigner. We can believe that his " pretty dears " were not with him during this long winter siege.

The months sped by and Faenza looked in vain for an army of relief. The Lombards and the Bolognese were occupied with their own affairs and unwilling to leave the shelter of their walls until the winter had passed. Day by day her provisions dwindled : her walls were crumbling to pieces, undermined in every direction by the Emperor's engineers. Finally on April 14th, 1241, the gallant little city surrendered. Her starving citizens knelt before their Lord and begged for some measure of mercy. They had little hope of escaping torture and death, for Frederick was no gentle enemy to rebels, and the town had defied him for nearly eight months and had worked him much injury in the past.

The Emperor, however, astonished his friends and his defeated enemies by forgiving the citizens for all their offences. Probably he remembered that the men of Faenza, alone among the Guelfs of Northern Italy, had refused to join in the conspiracy which had ended in the rebellion of his son. "The victor, with generous clemency, spared them," writes Matthew Paris; "by doing which he gained the affections of many. For when he saw that he had at length triumphed over his rebellious subjects, then his generous blood inclined to mercy, according to the words of the poet:—

> 'The foe destroyed, the noble lion rests content,
> The battle o'er, his fiery rage is fully spent.
> Wolves, bears and minor beasts, by baser feeling led
> With vengeance still unsated prey on their victims dead.'"

The Emperor was evidently in a merciful mood at this time, for in the same month Benevento, a Papal stronghold in his Kingdom, surrendered to his captains after a protracted siege, and the same clemency was extended to its citizens by his orders.

There seemed some probability that Frederick would soon be called upon to wage a more glorious struggle than this desultory warfare against rebellious towns: a struggle whose successful issue would earn him the gratitude of Europe for all time and make him truly the Saviour of Christendom. For this was the period of the Tartar invasion, which had inundated Russia, Poland and Silesia and was now pouring over Hungary, leaving terrible devastation in its train. The number of

the barbarians was estimated at half a million and their cruelty and ferocity were beyond description. The King of Hungary assembled his Magyars to arrest their progress, but his army was massacred and he himself narrowly escaped capture.

His ambassadors came to Frederick and besought him to come to their King's deliverance, and avert the disaster that was threatening the Empire. But Frederick was chained to Italy. He knew from experience that the fact that he was fighting the cause of Christendom would not debar the Pope from taking immediate advantage of his absence. "We remember," he said to the ambassadors, "that when we sailed to Palestine that dearest Father of ours invaded our Kingdom with a host of Milanese rebels. The future may be like the past." The Papal party would have been only too pleased to see him withdraw his hated presence from Italy, and as he refused to accommodate them in the matter they retaliated by accusing him of having himself invited the Tartar horde into Europe for some ends of his own.

Frederick disdained to reply to such a charge. He could not lead the Imperial armies against the Tartars himself, but he had every confidence in the power of the Germans to stem the tide of paganism. He commanded them to rally round his son Conrad and march to defend the borders of the Empire. Later he sent Enzio with four thousand knights to assist the German forces.

At the same time he sent a circular letter to the

monarchs of Christendom and urged them to unite to repel the common foe. He himself, he said, was prevented by the Pope's animosity from leading his armies against them. "O God! how much and how often have we been willing to humiliate ourselves, giving vent to every kind of good feeling, in order to prevail upon the Roman Pontiff to desist from giving cause of scandal throughout the world by his enmity against us, and place the bounds of moderation upon his ill-advised violence, in order that we might pacify our lawful subjects and govern them in a state of peace. But he has ordered a crusade to be published against me, who am an arm and advocate of the Church, which it was his duty and would have become him better to put in practice against the Tartars. He exults in the rebellion of our subjects, who are conspiring against our honour and fame, and as it is our most urgent business to free ourselves from enemies at home, how shall we repel these barbarians as well?

"Nevertheless, we have turned our attention to both matters; and with the help of God's providence, will apply our strength and industry to avert the scandal to the Church caused on one side by our enemies, and on the other by these savages; we have therefore expressly sent our beloved son Conrad and other chiefs of our Empire with a strong force to meet and check the attacks and violence of these barbarians. We most sincerely adjure your majesty to prepare us as soon as possible a complete force of brave knights and soldiers and a good supply of arms. . . . We trust in Christ

that these Tartars are to be driven back to their own Tartarus. Satan himself has lured them hither to die before the victorious Eagles of Imperial Europe : when Germany, rising with rage and zeal to battle, and France, that mother and nurse of chivalry ; the warlike and bold Spain, with fertile England, valorous in its men and protected by its fleet ; Almayne full of impetuous warriors ; maritime Denmark; untameable Italy; Burgundy that never knows peace ; restless Apulia with the piratical and unconquered islands of the Grecian, Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas ; Crete, Cyprus and Sicily ; when bloodthirsty Ireland with nimble Wales ; Scotland abounding in lakes, icy Norway, and every noble and renowned country lying under the royal star of the West, shall send forth their chosen soldiery preceded by the symbol of the life-giving cross, which strikes awe into rebels, aye, and into opposing Devils."

The letter called forth little response, and it was left to Germany to save Europe. From Faenza Frederick sent detailed directions to Conrad and the Princes. The Tartars, however, seemed to realise that in the Empire they would meet a stout foe, and though they actually besieged a fortress in Austria they retreated upon the advance of Conrad and the Duke of that province. They then hovered on the borders for about two years and eventually retired into the darkness of the Asiatic wilderness ; and Frederick was not called upon to lead Western Europe against the heathen.

In the meantime, while Frederick was slowly starving the men of Faenza into submission, while he was pro-

viding for the defence of his Empire against the Tartars, a new measure of enmity had been designed by Gregory and had been countered by Frederick with no gentle hand; and instead of leaving his Italian dominions to the tender mercies of the Pope while he marched into Germany to repel the barbarians, he led his army from Faenza to Rome.

Chapter XII

THE CAPTURED COUNCIL

WHEN every nation in Christendom had refused to help Gregory with their armies; when three Princes had rejected the offer of the Imperial crown, and France and Germany had betrayed a lively resentment at his efforts to raise up a rival to Frederick; when the Emperor had made himself almost supreme in Central Italy, had threatened Gregory at the very gates of Rome, and was now slowly bringing the stubborn resistance of Faenza to an end; then Gregory bethought himself of another means to work the downfall of his enemy. The King of France, when rebuking him for offering the crown of the Empire to his brother Robert, had said, "No power can depose the Emperor but a General Council." Frederick himself had appealed to a similar tribunal against the sentence of excommunication. A General Council had confirmed the deposition of the Emperor Otho by Innocent III in 1215 and the elevation of Frederick in Otho's stead. Now, in response to Frederick's appeal, in conformity with the precedent of twenty-five years ago, another General Council should be summoned, and Gregory would appear at the head of the Christian

hierarchy to judge the monarch who had defied the sentence of the Church.

Gregory therefore sent a circular letter around Christendom, bidding the Kings to send their envoys, and the Prelates to repair in person to Rome in the Easter of 1241, " to settle the arduous business of the Church." Frederick, however, had no mind for such a council as this. He had appealed to an assembly which should be convoked by some independent arbiter such as the pious Louis of France, before which Pope and Emperor should appear as rival but equal litigants, each to lay his case before the representatives of Christendom and to submit to their decision. From such a council he could hope for justice, and it was justice that he asked. But before this Council of Gregory's summoning he would appear as a criminal, his guilt already decided upon even if the measure of his punishment was not yet ordained. His chief judge would be the Pope, who, from his august position as head of the Church, would sway the opinions of the ecclesiastics either by reverence or fear; they, by virtue of their vows, being bound to obey his commands.

Nor was this the only reason which gave Frederick good cause for refusing to submit to such a tribunal. Gregory had summoned the Emperor's temporal enemies to the Council, such men as the Doge of Venice, the Count of Provence, the Marquess of Este, Alberic de Romano, Paul Traversaro, and the Milanese, men who were actually in rebellion against him, and of whom many were in the pay of Gregory. There were others, too,

whose impartiality Frederick had good cause to doubt. "Cardinal Otho, the Legate in England," he said, "and the King of England, aspiring to debase me, have drained that country of almost all its money, and have also caused an anathema to be pronounced against us in that kingdom, to the great shame of the Empire and the disparagement of our honour; wherefore we ought with good reason to consider them and all the Prelates of England as our enemies, inasmuch as they have poured forth their money to our injury and have stifled our honour to the utmost of their power; and they are not influenced by the circumstance of my being allied by the ties of kindred to the English King and that I have never injured them: it would be absurd and entirely discordant with reason for me to undergo a trial by them."

He was perfectly ready, he declared to the King of France, to make peace if Gregory would abandon the heretical Milanese. "We hate heresy, but the Pope is cherishing Milan, a nest of heresy and a sink of all vices. No wonder that we forbid the assembly of such a Council, since it is convoked to work our ruin! The Pope rejected the mediation of your Serenity and forbade our calling a Council to prove our innocence; we shall assuredly not allow it to be summoned in order that our name and race may be destroyed by him. We shall never stoop to lay our worldly affairs before a ghostly assembly convoked by our worst enemy. We beg your Royal Highness to make known to your Prelates our firm resolve to refuse them a safe conduct."

The Emperor resolved to prevent the assembly of the Council by force if warnings were not sufficient, and he acquainted all the Prelates of Christendom with his decision. From Faenza he wrote to all his faithful subjects and bade them prevent the Northern Prelates from reaching Rome: they might seize the goods of all whom they intercepted and hold their persons captive until they heard his pleasure. He ignored the danger of arousing the active resentment of those nations whose Prelates he injured. For the time being he would assert to the full his Imperial supremacy. He was the Emperor of Rome, the temporal Lord of Christendom, as the Pope of Rome was its spiritual head; and if the Prelates of Christendom should disregard his warnings and attempt to gather for his destruction, then no mere claim of nationality should save them from his wrath.

"Oh! what anxiety, what manifold trouble afflicted the heart's blood of the Emperor in defending his Empire!" exclaims Matthew Paris at this point. "For he had six numerous and formidable armies: one, which he commanded in person (at Faenza); another, a double army, in the Genoese territory, namely, a naval force to oppose by sea the passage of the Legates and Prelates, who despised his counsel, and another force by land near the sea-coast, which continually ravaged the crops and vineyards of the Genoese; a third army, under his son Conrad, heir to the kingdom of Jerusalem, who had collected under him an innumerable force from the whole of Germany and the adjacent provinces under

the Imperial dominion, he had sent against the Tartars; a fourth army he had employed in the Trevisan March; a fifth was engaged in Ancona and the valley of Spoleto; and the sixth in the Holy Land under Ralph, his marshal." Such extensive operations naturally entailed a heavy expenditure, and Frederick was constantly harassed by the need for money. At the siege of Faenza he was even driven to issue a leather coinage, each piece of which bore the value of a golden augustul. The coins, strange to say, became very popular in Central Italy, and in the following year their face-value was honourably paid by the Imperial treasury to whoever presented them.

Genoa had been appointed by the Pope as the meeting place of the Prelates of England, France, Spain and Northern Italy, and from there they were to be conveyed to Rome by the Genoese fleet. Accordingly upon Pisa fell the task of preventing the safe arrival of the ecclesiastics at Rome. The two great maritime cities had both changed their politics since the Boy of Sicily had journeyed northwards in 1212 to gain the Imperial Crown. Then Genoa had sent her fleet to protect him while Pisa had endeavoured to bar his passage and wrest him from the Genoese. Now Genoa was protecting his enemies and Pisa was seeking to deliver them into his hands.

Pisa, it must be confessed, had no liking for the duty that had been laid upon her by her Lord, which would involve her in a war with Genoa: but she could not disobey the Imperial commands. She endeavoured to

avoid the task by sending envoys to her rival and entreating her not to convey the Prelates to Rome. Genoa, however, was equally bound to obey the Church and fulfil her engagements with Gregory, and the conflict was inevitable. Pisa, therefore, since she could not evade the duty, resolved to acquit herself manfully in its accomplishment.

Her own fleet of forty war vessels was strengthened by the arrival of Enzio with twenty-seven galleys from the Kingdom, and this formidable force lay waiting in the harbour of Pisa until news should arrive that the Genoese fleet had started for Rome. By the April of 1241 the august assembly of Prelates and the Lombard envoys had gathered at Genoa. The Papal Legate, Gregory of Romagna, was more remarkable for zeal than caution, and though Genoa had only provided thirty-two galleys, he prevailed upon the clerics to embark on their perilous journey on the 1st of May.

The Genoese Admiral, Malocello, was as rash as the Legate, and instead of making a wide detour in order to avoid Enzio and the Pisans, he sailed gaily down the coast and fell in with the enemy between the islands of Giglio and Monte Cristo on the 3rd of May. The result was a foregone conclusion, for the Genoese were outnumbered by two to one and were hampered by their holy but non-militant freight. At first they had a measure of success, for they captured three Pisan galleys before the main fleet arrived. They afterwards made much of this to the Pope, informed him that they had beheaded every man on board the captured vessels, and then,

with unconscious humour, complained of the barbarity of Frederick's sailors. But the aspect of affairs soon changed and the victory fell to the greater number. Only five galleys escaped to Genoa, with the Spanish Prelates on board. Two thousand soldiers, sailors and priests, including the Archbishop of Besançon, were killed or drowned; four thousand were taken prisoners, and a large store of English gold fell into Enzio's hands.

An imposing array of churchmen were transferred to the Pisan galleys, among them three Cardinals, the Papal Legates from England, France and Genoa; the Archbishops of Bourdeaux, Rouen and Auch; eight Bishops; six French Abbots; and more than a hundred Proctors who had come in the stead of the more cautious ecclesiastics. The dignitaries were treated in a manner to which they must have been little accustomed. They arrived at Pisa in a very forlorn condition and were then put in chains by Enzio's orders and flung into prison.

On their subsequent sufferings when they were conveyed from Pisa to Naples, Matthew Paris, snug in his scriptorium at St. Albans, waxes eloquent and pitiful. "They were committed to safe custody in a castle surrounded by water near the town of Naples. But they did not all feel the calamities of imprisonment in an equal degree; the condition of the Bishop of Praeneste was most wretched, although disease or excessive weakness had taken fast hold on them all. For during the voyage they sat fastened and squeezed together in heaps, and with the intolerable heat falling upon them, and flies flitting round them and stinging them like scorpions, they

dragged on a long martyrdom, tortured by hunger and thirst, and exposed to insults and annoyances at the will of the wicked crew of hostile pirates; and all this they endured owing to their obedience. A prison, therefore, seemed to them a place of rest, although it afforded them none; they in consequence pined away, especially the more delicate of them, and languished under various diseases; and some of the religious men and many others breathed forth their wretched lives, and departed from the miseries of this life to the Lord, after gaining the palm of martyrdom. Shortly after, too, the Bishop of Praeneste, obedient to the Pope till death, passed from this wicked world to a place of rest." They would have done well, these religious men, to have heeded the Emperor's warning.

"We mourn over you," wrote Gregory to the captives: "Joseph is not, Simeon is kept in chains and little Benjamin is taken away; we do not forget you, but we think of remedies for your woes." The Pope, however, could find no remedies. The three Cardinals, the English and Italian Prelates, and the Lombard envoys remained in prison until Gregory's death and some while afterwards. The French clergy, more fortunate, were released at the urgent representations of King Louis, who bade Frederick remember the long friendship of the House of Capet and the House of Hohenstaufen and his own refusal to countenance the Pope's effort to raise up a rival Emperor in Frederick's stead.

The Pope's darling project had been ruined by the bold stroke of his enemy. The great calamity had been

preceded by the fall of Faenza in April : it was followed by other disasters. Hot on the heels of the news of the capture of his Council came tidings of a defeat in Lombardy. The loyalists of Pavia had given battle to the Legate Montelengo and the Milanese, had utterly defeated the Papal partisans, captured three hundred and fifty knights and the Banner of the Keys and of Milan. Gregory had lost a large store of gold in the defeat of the Genoese fleet ; now another treasure, wrung as usual from the English clergy, was captured by Frederick's agents on its way through Italy. In June messengers arrived with the news that the Emperor himself had left Faenza and was marching to Rome at the head of his army.

Gregory might view with alarm the increasing triumph of the Emperor ; he might talk of peace in his letters to other Princes ; but before his virulent hatred of Frederick his prudence went down. He could bring himself to make no reasonable advances, could listen to none that were made to him. Frederick marched through Spoleto, received the homage of the capital of that province, ravaged the lands of the cities who still held out for the Pope. He entered the Campagna and halted at Tivoli almost within sight of Rome, while his new ally, Colonna, captured Palestrina with his help.

A last effort was made for peace. Richard of Cornwall, the Emperor's brother-in-law, returning from the Crusades, landed in Sicily and made his way northwards to Frederick's camp, where he received an affectionate welcome. He was then sent to Rome as a messenger of

peace. The Emperor entrusted him with the fullest discretionary powers, promised to abide by whatever terms the Earl should make, and gave him a letter with the Imperial seal as a formal ratification of the treaty that he might arrange. It was a sincere effort on Frederick's part to put an end to the struggle. The Earl, who had been welcomed in Sicily as one who had striven in the cause of Christendom, found that at Rome the service of the Pope was the only title to respect. The fact that he had toiled in Palestine was of no account: that he was a friend of the Emperor was a claim to distrust. He was received by the Roman mob with insult and indignity, by the Pope with scant courtesy. All his proposals were scorned; the complete and abject submission of the Emperor was the only condition of peace that the inexorable old man would consider. Richard returned to the Imperial camp with any respect he might have had for the saintliness of Gregory entirely dispelled. "I am glad," said Frederick, "that you have learned by experience the truth of what we have before told you."

Frederick moved from Tivoli, ravaged the territory around Rome and stormed and burnt many castles. Nothing, however, could quell the spirit of the dauntless Pontiff. "Permit not yourselves to be cast down, ye faithful," he wrote to the Lombards, "by the unfavourable appearances of the present moment; be neither depressed by calamity nor elated by prosperity. The bark of St. Peter is for a time tossed by tempests and dashed against breakers; but it soon emerges unexpec-

tedly from the foaming billows, and sails in uninjured majesty over the glassy surface."

The bark of St. Peter did indeed weather the storm as it had weathered fiercer storms before: but it bore a new pilot at its helm. Gregory's spirit might be unconquerable, but his flesh was vulnerable. He was very old: according to Matthew Paris he was approaching his hundredth year. He had been wont to seek refuge from the unhealthy Roman summer in his palace of Anagni, to soothe his aged limbs in the baths of Viterbo. But the Emperor's armies surrounded Rome and he could not leave the city. The chagrin of failure preyed upon his enfeebled frame, and the loss of Monteforte seemed to be the culmination of his sorrows. This castle had been built by him with moneys that had been contributed by the faithful for the Crusades. It was fortified with especial care and designed as a place of refuge for Gregory and his kindred in the event of a rising at Rome. In August it fell before Frederick's army, and its inmates, among whom were some nephews and relatives of Gregory, were hanged. One tower of its walls was alone left standing as a memorial of the Emperor's revenge.

The blow completed the work of years and of vexation of spirit, and the old man took to his bed. "Unable to endure the grief he felt, but which he himself had caused, he went the way of all flesh on August 22nd, to receive his reward from the Judge on high, according to his deserts."[1]

[1] Matthew Paris.

Frederick imparted the news to the monarchs of Christendom in words which at any rate were not unjust and avoided the indecent exultation with which a later Pope welcomed his own death. "The Pope Gregory the Ninth is taken away from the world and has escaped the vengeance of the Emperor, of whom he was the implacable enemy. He is dead through whom peace was banished from the earth and discord prospered. For his death, though by him so deeply injured and implacably persecuted, we feel compassion; that compassion had been more profound if he had lived to establish peace between the Empire and the Papacy. God, we trust, will raise up a Pope of more pacific temper; whom we are prepared to defend as a devout son, if he follow not the fatal crime and animosity of his predecessor."

. . . . . .

Christendom might at last hope to see an end of the strife which had disturbed her tranquillity. The passionate personality of Gregory had been removed from the scene. The Emperor had shown himself ready to welcome any terms of peace which were consistent with honour. In the hour of his victory he proved the sincerity of his frequent avowal that his quarrel was not with the Church but with her unworthy head, and throughout all Germany and Italy the Imperial proclamation threatened with a terrible death all who should presume upon the widowed state of the Church. The Cardinals were allowed to assemble at Rome without

molestation to transact their solemn function of electing a new Pope.

Frederick withdrew into his Kingdom for a short while to enjoy a restful sojourn at his palace of Foggia. He was visited there by a private grief. His Empress, Isabella of England, died in child-birth on the 1st of December. "Her excelling beauty and manners" had won his affection, and we may believe that the marriage was a happy one if the Empress had sufficient philosophy to ignore his Oriental proclivities. She left two children, the younger Henry and a daughter.

The election of a successor to Gregory was hindered by dissensions among the Cardinals. Of the ten who were gathered at Rome, four were for Romano, the Bishop of Porto, and six for Cardinal Geoffrey Castiglione of Milan. The former candidate was in bad odour with Frederick for three reasons: he had been conspicuous for his enmity to him during Gregory's life; he had been a cruel oppressor of the University of Paris; and there was the ugly stain on his reputation of a supposed seduction of Queen Blanche of France. A two-thirds majority, however, was necessary for a valid election, and the members of the Conclave who favoured Geoffrey turned to the Emperor in their dilemma and besought him to release the two Cardinals whom he still held in captivity. These were Otho, the English Legate, and James, the Bishop of Palestrina. James was no sooner brought into the Emperor's presence than he hurled forth an excommunication against him: but

both were allowed to go to Rome on condition that they should return to their prison after the election.

The Cardinals, who now numbered twelve, were placed under strict confinement by the Roman Senator in order to hasten their election. The heat was intense, their allowance of food scanty in the extreme, and Robert de Summercote and Romano, one of the candidates, fell ill and died. This simplified matters, and on October 16th, 1241, Geoffrey of Milan was elected Pope. He adopted the name of Celestine IV and bore it only seventeen days : he died before the ceremony of consecration could take place.

The Cardinals, aghast at the prospect of another election, with all its attendant discomforts, fled from Rome and dispersed over Central Italy. The confusion at Rome seemed to reproduce itself over all the Empire. In Northern Italy the war, which had slumbered awhile, became suddenly more acute. Germany relapsed into disorder. Her nobles were ever a turbulent race and could not be controlled by a boy king and his guardians : only the Emperor could quell them, and he had been absent too long.

The increased activity of the Lombard rebels called down upon them a captain whose prowess they had never yet experienced. Enzio, the King of Sardinia, had proved his mettle as a leader in the Anconitan March, in Romagna, and on the sea. He was now sent into Lombardy at the head of a strong force, and confounded the rebels by his extraordinary activity. He dashed from end to end of the province, storming,

burning and ravaging, and the mere rumour of his approach made the enemy scurry into the shelter of their walled cities. But even he could make little permanent impression on a foe who resolutely refused to risk a battle in the open with so formidable a general.

This Enzio was the best beloved of all the children of Frederick, whom he resembled in many ways. Handsome, brave and courtly, a poet in his moments of leisure, he earned the admiration even of his enemies. "A valiant man, and bold and stout-hearted," is the dictum of the friar Salimbene; "doughty in arms, and a man of solace when he would and a maker of songs: and in war he was wont to expose himself most boldly to perils." His soldiers worshipped him with a passionate devotion, and his gallant bearing awoke the heart and passions of many a noble maiden of Italy.

Meanwhile Christendom was for nearly two years without a Pope. At the beginning of 1242 most of the Cardinals assembled at Rome, but month after month dragged by in futile dissensions. The Emperor urged and threatened in vain. "Your mother is dying," he said, "while you are pulling different ways." He released the Cardinals Otho and James, who had returned to their captivity after the election of Celestine, in the hope of hastening a decision. "It was believed and asserted by many who were ignorant of the truth of the affair," writes the English chronicler, "that the Emperor himself was the chief hindrance to the welfare of the Church and was the cause of the Apostolic Chair remaining empty." The

King of France, after bidding the Conclave to hasten in their business and to have no fear of the Emperor, threatened to set up a French Pope on his own authority, by virtue of an old charter which, tradition said, had been given to St. Denis by St. Clement.

The Ghibellines were loud in their abuse of the dilatory Cardinals. "Sons of Ephraim who turn back in the day of battle! sons of Belial! sheep of scattering! animals without heads, hated of the world! It is not Jesus Christ Himself, the Mediator, who is in the midst of you, but Satan divided against himself, the father of lies. Each one of you is eager for the Chair, so none is elected and the Church is brought to confusion. The thunders of Peter and Paul are silent and you are dumb dogs. Take shame upon yourselves! the lowest creatures are wiser than you! birds have a leader; bees have a queen. Rachel has no husband; her little ones cry out for bread and there is no one to give it them. You see not how nigh you are to shipwreck: put on your senses and your reason once more that you may recover your Head."

The year 1243 dawned and still the Conclave wrangled and delayed. Frederick resolved to try sterner measures to bring them to reason. He gathered a great army of ten thousand knights, ravaged the lands around Rome and seized the estates of the Cardinals, which he gave over to his soldiers to pillage as they would. The Cardinals had fled from Rome at his approach, but the destruction wrought to their lands and castles brought them to their senses. They entreated the Emperor to withdraw

into his Kingdom for a while, and promised to lose no more time in filling the vacant Chair of St. Peter. Frederick retired to Foggia and the Conclave assembled at Anagni. On June 24th their choice fell upon the Cardinal Sinibald Fiesco of Genoa, who assumed the title of Innocent the Fourth.

Chapter XIII

A NEW ENEMY

"IN the Cardinal I have lost a good friend; in the Pope I shall find my worst enemy." Such were Frederick's words when his courtiers congratulated him on the elevation of one who in the past had seemed his friend. He had no illusions about the endurance of that friendship; "No Pope can be a Ghibelline," he said. Yet even he must have been astounded at the sudden change from supposed goodwill to the rancorous enmity which seemed to blaze up in the heart of Sinibald with the assumption of his new title and dignity.

Innocent the Fourth soon proved that all the more repellent features of Gregory's character were present in his own to a superlative degree. No Pope before him, not Hildebrand himself, had asserted with such amazing audacity the ineffable sanctity of the Papal person. "We are no mere man," he declared; "we have the place of God upon earth." His bearing was consistent in its domineering arrogance with such a pretension. The humility, the gentleness, the charity, which might seem to be the fitting attributes of the Vicar of Christ, found no place in his relentless nature. "He left behind

him," says Milman, "a name odious for ambition, rapacity, and implacable pride."

His greed was insatiable, and before his death he was reputed to have become the wealthiest Pope that had ever occupied the Chair. England suffered even more grievously from his extortions than from those of his predecessor. He was wont to refer to her as "our garden of delights, our inexhaustible well"; to her despicable King as "our vassal, or rather our slave." Her benefices were filled by Italian priests, who might live in what manner they would so long as they sent a goodly portion of the wealth of their flock to Rome. The money gathered by his agents went rarely to any more holy purpose than the persecution of the Emperor or the enrichment of his own relatives. The sin of Nepotism was his especial crime in the eyes of good churchmen. His kinsmen were made Cardinals, Bishops and Abbots, or endowed with civil offices. "Wretches, why are ye weeping?" he was reported to have said to them as they gathered around his deathbed; "have I not made you all rich enough?"

In the choice of his instruments he paid little heed to holiness of life as a qualification for advancement. Among his Legates might be found ruthless warriors, such as the Cardinal Regnier; drunkards, such as the Bishop of Ferrara; profligates, such as Montelengo; or dishonest knaves, such as Albert von Beham. The Church itself groaned under his oppression and greed. His favoured agents, the Franciscan and Dominican friars, swarmed over every country, intruded into every parish,

and spied upon every prelate or priest who was suspected of falling short in that unquestioning submission to the Papal authority which was incumbent upon ecclesiastics. In every corner of the Empire they sowed the seed of sedition and revolt, preying upon the superstition of the ignorant and threatening with the torments of hell those who should cleave to that Prince of Belial, their temporal Lord.

With such a Pope there could be no possibility of peace, unless Frederick should cast aside his pride, surrender his honour and, clad in sackcloth and ashes, go in penitence to his enemy and cast himself down before his feet. To the unspeakable ignominy of such another Canossa it was not likely that Frederick would ever descend. He might be passionately anxious for an end to this futile strife, might be ready to humiliate himself in some measure by yielding to harsh demands ; but to an abject and unconditional submission he would never fall.

The new pontificate could not, however, open without some overtures for peace. The Emperor's congratulations upon his new dignity were borne to Innocent by Peter de Vinea and Thaddaeus of Suessa. An embassy returned to him with the Pope's conditions which must be fulfilled before more serious negotiations could be commenced. If a truce was to be made, it must include all those who had fought for the Church. The prelates and priests who still lingered in confinement in Naples must be released. The Emperor must state what satisfaction he was ready to give for the crimes which had induced

Gregory to excommunicate him. The Church on her side, if by any chance she had done him any wrong, would do him justice. On this matter and on many others a General Council, composed of Kings, Princes and Prelates, should decide.

Frederick, too, had his conditions. The Papal Legate, Montelengo, must be recalled from Milan ; his presence there lent the countenance of the Papacy to the rebels. Salinguerra, who had been treacherously imprisoned after the capture of Ferrara by the Papal allies, must be released. It was a cause of offence that the Archbishop of Mentz, while under the ban of the Empire, had been made Legate in Germany. The Pope must take active steps to suppress heresy in Lombardy. He must cease to slight the Imperial dignity by refusing to admit Frederick's ambassadors to his presence.

Innocent answered these demands in sequence. The Emperor had no business to question the Pope's right to send his Legates where he would. Salinguerra was the captive of the men of Venice ; his release was no affair of the Pope's. The Archbishop of Mentz was a devout son of the Church and should retain his office as Legate. Touching the heresy of the Lombards, it was impossible for the Pope to deal with that until the Emperor had abandoned his warfare against them. The Imperial ambassadors shared the excommunication of their Lord, and could not therefore be permitted to gaze upon the face of the Pope : he would, however, concede so much as to absolve them from the excommunication, and with them the Archbishop of Palermo, who

had performed the forbidden sacred offices before Frederick in defiance of the sentence of the Church.

Other causes of dispute arose. The inclusion of the Lombards in the truce continued to be an insuperable obstacle. Innocent also demanded that the two provinces of Ancona and Spoleto, which Frederick had torn from the Church, should be restored. Frederick replied that they had been given by him to the Papacy and had been justly forfeited by Gregory's conduct. He would, however, consent to hold them in feudal tenure from the Pope, would supply a body of 500 knights when required, and would pay a yearly rent into the Papal coffers. He would also undertake the reconquest of the Holy Land at his own cost. But nothing would satisfy Innocent but the complete restoration of the provinces: they were too valuable an adjunct to his temporal power to be relinquished.

The relations between the two parties became more and more precarious. The Pope wrote to Montelengo urging him to stir up the Lombards to a more active warfare against the Emperor. Frederick sent two friars to the gallows for carrying seditious letters, and kept a strict watch upon all the roads to Rome to intercept any stores of money that might be on their way thither.

The revolt of Viterbo threatened to precipitate an open rupture. This city had cast off its allegiance to the Pope in 1240 and had invited Frederick to become its Lord. Its citizens had seen him build a vast stronghold of eighteen towers, called the Castle of Hercules, as a sign

of his authority, and had uttered no word of protest. Now, however, in the August of 1243, they broke out into sudden rebellion. The Imperial captain, Count Simon of Chieti, withdrew into the Castle and prepared to withstand a siege. The Cardinal Regnier hastened with his forces to the assistance of the rebellious townsmen and blockaded the garrison. Count Simon despatched urgent appeals to his master for succour. "The fathers of old," he wrote to Frederick, "did not look for Christ's coming more eagerly than we look for your arrival. Show your face and we shall be saved."

The Pope protested to the Emperor that the Cardinal Regnier was acting without his instructions, but secretly sent a large sum of gold to the militant churchman. Frederick appeared before Viterbo early in October and laid siege to the city. Two months passed in vain endeavours to batter down its walls. Then Cardinal Otho came to the Emperor, bearing urgent requests for peace from Innocent. If Frederick would agree to withdraw from Viterbo, the Imperial garrison and the Ghibellines of the city should be allowed to join him unmolested: to that Otho pledged his word of honour. Frederick agreed and the garrison left their stronghold. They were immediately attacked by the populace at the instigation of the friars, and Otho strove in vain to save them. Many were killed, many captured, but few reached the Imperial camp.

The Emperor withdrew his forces from the city which had withstood his might, and complained loudly to the Pope of the treacherous massacre of his soldiers.

The Pope replied that it was no matter for surprise that a city should return to its true Lord. So uncompromising an answer should have assured Frederick that it was futile to hope for peace, but he curbed his anger and made one more attempt.

Peter de Vinea, Thaddaeus of Suessa and the Count of Toulouse, were sent to Rome with full powers to arrange a treaty, by whose terms the Emperor should abide. Those terms, as propounded by the Pope, were harsh in the extreme. The Emperor must restore all the lands which he had taken from the Papacy or its adherents since his excommunication in 1239. He must explain to the world that his disregard of that excommunication was not prompted by any contempt for the late Pope, but by the fact that the sentence had never been formally and personally declared to him: there was, he must aver, no question about the Pope's right to excommunicate him; and he must henceforth respect the excommunication until he should be formally absolved. For his offence in this matter he must atone by fasting and almsgiving and must pay a fine hereafter to be named. The Prelates whom he still held in captivity must be released and amply compensated for their losses and sufferings: the compensation should be estimated by three Cardinals. A free pardon and amnesty must be granted to all who had fought on the side of the Church: all prisoners must be released, all exiles recalled. The Pope and his Cardinals should arbitrate between the Emperor and the Lombard rebels. All these things should be carried out, saving only the honour and in-

tegrity of the Empire; and then, and not till then, should the Emperor be absolved and received back into the bosom of Mother Church.

To this treaty, which deprived Frederick of all the material advantages he had gained in the late wars, which relegated him to the position of the conquered when the balance of success had certainly weighed in his favour, the Imperial ambassadors set their seal on March 31st, 1244. It was agreed that its terms should be kept secret until such time as both parties consented to their publication.

Frederick uttered no protest when he heard of the hard bargain that his enemy had driven, but wrote joyfully to his son Conrad of the impending reconciliation. It was too soon, however, for rejoicing. The Pope was not sincere: he had expected, no doubt, that the Emperor would repudiate the treaty and thus place himself in the wrong; and when Frederick accepted it without reservation he began to repent that he had not exacted more humiliating terms. The gall arose in him and he commenced a series of wanton provocations with the object of goading the Emperor into retaliation. He buzzed like an angry wasp. A slight reaction against his popularity in Rome was attributed to Frederick's treacherous machinations. The stipulation that the terms of the treaty should be kept secret was flagrantly violated and men might purchase copies at the Lateran for sixpence. He vowed that the compensation of the Prelates for their imprisonment by the Emperor should cost the Imperial Treasury a prodigious sum. He declared that

in his arbitration between the Emperor and the Lombards he would consult only those Cardinals whom he chose. He worked himself up into a fury and said that the Lombards should have his help whether the Emperor were absolved or no. The men of Viterbo, meanwhile, were slaughtering and plundering the friends of the Empire in their neighbourhood, but Frederick held his hand and would do nothing to give Innocent cause to retire from the truce.

Frederick's calmness and restraint seemed to exasperate Innocent the more. He moved from Rome, nominally to meet the Emperor and arrange more comprehensive and final terms of peace. He halted at Narni, some few miles distant from the Emperor's resting place at Terni. These two towns had striven against each other in the late wars, and Innocent declared that there should be no peace until the men of Terni had made compensation for the defeat they had wrought on the men of Narni. He had agreed to meet Frederick at Rieti, half-way between the two towns : but the whole journey was merely a deception, and his real plans were now complete.

Rome, he had decided, was no comfortable abode for him. The Emperor was too near and too powerful, the populace of the city too fickle. He would retire to a safer distance where he might pursue his designs against the Emperor in safety. On the 27th of June, instead of advancing to Rieti, he fell back to Sutri. A report was spread that Frederick had sent a body of troops to capture him. Pretending to credit this " wise

and salutary fiction," as his chaplain terms it, he mounted his horse soon after midnight and rode furiously through the dark hours until he arrived at Civita Vecchia. Five Cardinals followed hard in his wake, and joined him on board a Genoese galley, twenty of which were awaiting his arrival according to his carefully laid plans. Seven days later the fleet rode into the harbour of Genoa.

"Our soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler," said Innocent, as he entered his native city; "the snare is broken and we are delivered." He was received with a tumultuous welcome. The streets were decked with velvets and silks and banners, the bells pealed joyfully, the trumpets blared, and the long procession of priests and choristers chanted "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Frederick meanwhile was in no amiable frame of mind. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," he quoted. He realised that Innocent had been playing with him in these long negotiations. He cursed his captains in the Campagna roundly for their negligence in allowing the Pope to elude them. He declared that Innocent had gone to Genoa to place himself at the head of the Lombard rebels. He advanced northwards to Pisa, perhaps with the intention of laying siege to the city that harboured his enemy.

Innocent, however, had no intention of remaining in such close proximity to the Imperial power. In November he left Genoa, journeyed northwards across the Alps and on the 2nd of December arrived at Lyons. Here he was safe from the Emperor's clutches, for Lyons, though

nominally a part of the Empire, was a free city under the authority of its Archbishop.

He would have preferred, indeed, to have sought an even safer abode, to have found refuge under the protection of a monarch who would espouse his cause. But no monarch was anxious to shelter so formidable a guest. The pious King of France visited him at the monastery of Citeaux and knelt before him in becoming reverence. His reply to the Pope's request for an asylum at Rheims, however, was to refer the matter to his nobles and councillors, and these declined the heavy and costly responsibility. The King of Arragon regretted that he could not undertake to offer the Holy Father the hospitality of his Kingdom. The King of England might lend an ear to the honeyed words of the Papal Legate. "What an immortal glory for your reign," said that dignitary, "if the Father of Fathers should personally appear in England! He has often said that it would give him great pleasure to see the pleasant city of Westminster, and wealthy London." But the Father of Fathers was in bad odour with the King's Council. "We have already suffered too much," they replied, "from the usuries and simonies of Rome; we do not want the Pope to pillage us." Matthew Paris comments on this refusal in sufficiently picturesque language. "The evil name of the Papal court," he writes, "the stench of which exhaled its foul smoke to the clouds, deserved that such a result should ensue."

Innocent gnashed his teeth at these several rebuffs. "We must first crush or pacify the great dragon," were

his rumoured words ; " and then we shall easily trample these smaller basilisks under foot." Even in Lyons his domineering conduct had excited unpopularity and the angry townsmen had threatened to throw his priests into the Rhone, and had burnt his costly and extensive wardrobe. They were only conciliated by lavish gifts of English money, which continued to flow into the Papal coffers.

Yet even this source of pecuniary consolation, unfailing though it seemed, began to grow precarious and thereby caused Innocent much anxiety. From Lyons he had sent Master Martin to England to demand a special contribution for the necessities of the Apostolic See. The matter had come to the ears of the Emperor, who thereupon sent Walter of Ocra with a letter to Henry and his Council. This letter ended with something like a threat, that all money sent to the Pope's assistance would be added to the Imperial treasury. The Emperor begged the English King to contribute nothing more to the Pope to his prejudice : if that request was disobeyed the subjects of the English King who were sojourning in the Empire should be visited with a heavy vengeance. On the other hand, if the King would abide by his counsels, he would free England from the tax which Pope Innocent the Third had laid upon it and would rescue it from other burdens with which it was daily oppressed by the Pope.

This letter, according to Matthew Paris, regained the affections of many for the Emperor, and it certainly worked not a little harm to the Pope. Master Martin's

demands were met by the Prelates of England with a flat refusal. "The treacherous Master Martin then clandestinely laid greedy hands upon the revenues of many vacant churches," continues the same chronicler: "but of these things it is better, out of respect to the Roman Church, to be silent, than to relate them for the purpose of exciting scandal." They served, however, to excite a popular outburst of fury against the Papal collector. Fulk Fitzwarenne and some other nobles bearded him in his own chamber. "Arise, get thee forth! Depart at once from England!" commanded the intruders. "In whose name speakest thou?" asked Master Martin. "In the name of the Barons of England. If you are not gone in three days, you and yours shall be cut in pieces."

Martin sought the King and demanded if this thing was done in his name. "It is not by my command," answered Henry; "but my Barons will no longer endure your depredations and iniquities; and with difficulty I have hitherto prevented them in their fury from attacking you and tearing you limb from limb." The priest was overcome with fear and trembled. "I ask your majesty, out of your love for God and reverence for the Pope, to allow me a safe conduct out of your realms." "May the devil carry you away to hell!" was Henry's impatient answer. Master Martin slunk away from London at night and rode to Dover with the speed of panic. And his departure, we are assured, rejoiced the hearts of many.

Frederick at this time was "like a bear robbed of her

whelps." He ravaged the Papal territories with a ruthless hand. His temper was not improving under the stress of continued persecution and the Pope's subjects met with little mercy. A letter sent to the Pope by some zealous Guelf rises to fine heights of virulent abuse in its description of the Emperor's harrying of the faithful. He is compared with Lucifer, the great Dragon, Herod, Nero, Nimrod, Uzziah, Belshazzar, and a host of other notorious characters. He has an iron neck and a brazen forehead. His oaths are as fleeting as the morning clouds. He has shut up three Empresses in turn in his secret prison and caused them to be poisoned by his cook. "Let him be hurled forth from the sanctuary, and let his name be forgotten, even as that of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin."

Innocent might have expected that Frederick would avenge himself in this way, but he was not minded to let it pass in silence. On Holy Thursday, 1245, he renewed the excommunication which had been pronounced by Gregory and included King Enzio with his father in the sentence. Europe, however, was becoming too familiar with the situation to regard the anathema with becoming awe, or to accept unreservedly the awful guilt of the Emperor which it implied. The words of a priest of Paris expressed the general state of mind throughout Christendom. "I have received commands," he said to his flock, "to issue a solemn sentence of excommunication against the Emperor Frederick. Of the reason for this I am ignorant; but I am not ignorant of the serious controversy and unquenchable

hatred that has arisen between him and the Pope. I know not whether the Pope or the Emperor be the offender; but I excommunicate the guilty party, whichever of the two it be; and the one who is innocent I absolve."

Chapter XIV

THE COUNCIL OF LYONS

THERE had been a deeper motive behind Innocent's flight from Rome than the mere desire for personal safety. He realised, as his predecessor at last had done, that the condemnations and anathemas of the Pope had lost the efficacy they once possessed, and that Frederick could never be brought to submission by these means. Gregory had sought to bring a more potent weapon to his aid, the voice of the whole of Christendom, the judgment of a General Council of the Church. If such a power pronounced the Emperor guilty of the heinous crimes laid to his charge, if it judged those crimes to be worthy of the utmost penalty and deposed him and his heirs from the Imperial dignity, then, in the eyes of at least the half of Christendom, Frederick would no longer be the Emperor of Rome and another might be chosen in his stead. Whether such a deposition would be lawful or unlawful was written in no Constitution of Christendom ; nor was the composition of such a Council defined by writ. But however vague the powers it exercised, however inadequately it might represent the great Christian Commonwealth, its decrees would be invested with far

greater solemnity than the unsupported pronouncement of the Pope.

The Council which Gregory had summoned had never reached Rome, and the destination of most of its members had been an Imperial prison. If Innocent had stayed in Italy a similar reverse might well have befallen him. In Lyons, however, he could hold his Council in peace. The august representatives of Christendom could travel there in safety: they could deliberate without fear of rude interruption, either from the armies of the incensed Emperor or the irreverent clamourings of the Roman rabble. It was to Lyons, therefore, that he summoned the Kings, Princes and Prelates and bade them gather themselves together on the day of St. John the Baptist. The Emperor himself was cited to appear before the great tribunal, to answer for his sins and make such reparation as should seem good to his judges.

The great Lateran Council, held by Innocent III in 1215 had been attended by no less than five hundred Prelates; the Council of Lyons, held by Innocent IV in 1245, was attended by only one hundred and forty. This singular decline was due in some measure to the distracted state of Christendom. Palestine was overrun by the Kharizmian Turks; the Patriarchate of Constantinople was rent by schism; Hungary had not yet recovered from the devastations of the Tartar hordes; Germany was seething with internal disorders. But we may believe, that many of the Fathers of the Church were absent from other reasons than this. If a Prelate sympathised with the Emperor, if he deprecated

the harshness of Innocent and the inordinate ambition of the Papacy, he would choose, unless he were a man of singular courage, to remain in his own country and lend no hand in the condemnation of Frederick rather than to raise his voice openly in the Council and incur the enmity of so ruthless and formidable a Pope. Frederick himself had foreseen this eventuality in connection with the Council which Gregory had summoned, and had protested that, while his enemies would flock to the assembly eager for his destruction, those who believed in the right of his own cause would either remain away or, overawed by their spiritual head, would acquiesce by their silence in the sentence which would inevitably be pronounced.

On the 26th of June the Council met in the convent of St. Just for its first session. Besides the great body of Prelates and the twelve Cardinals, there were the lay envoys from the various states of Christendom. The Latin Emperor of Constantinople was there in person and sat on the Pope's right hand. The Counts of Provence and Toulouse sat on his left. Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, was among the ambassadors of England and seized the opportunity to protest vigorously against the Papal extortions in his native land. The great function of representing the Emperor, of refuting on his behalf the charges that would be made against him, was entrusted to Thaddaeus of Suessa, one of Frederick's most trusted councillors.

The meeting was inaugurated with all due solemnity, with psalms and prayers and hymns. Then Thaddaeus

stept forward, and in the name of his Lord made a final appeal for peace. The Emperor would do great things for Christendom, would use all his might in her service. He would compel the Eastern Empire to return to the fold of orthodoxy; he would hurl the Tartars back into their Asiatic homes, would sweep the Kharismians from the soil of Palestine and restore it to the worshippers of Christ. He would give back to the Papacy all the territories that she claimed and would give ample satisfaction for his offences.

The Pope, however, had gathered the Council for a sterner purpose than that of enforcing terms. "How shall I bind this shifting Proteus?" he asked. "These are fine words and specious promises. The axe is laid at the root of the tree and he would avert it. If we were weak enough to believe this deceiver, who would guarantee that he should be made to keep his word?" "The Kings of France and England," answered Thaddaeus. "We object to them," said Innocent, "for if he violated the treaty, as he assuredly would, we should be obliged to rebuke them; and then, instead of one, we should have the three greatest monarchs of Christendom for our enemies." Thaddaeus answered nothing, and the Council broke up in silence.

Two days later it assembled again in the Cathedral of St. John. The Pope, clad in the sumptuous robes of his office, celebrated Mass and afterwards mounted the pulpit. "'O all ye who pass by the way,' he quoted; 'behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.' I have five sorrows, which I may liken unto

the five wounds of Christ. These are the Tartar invasion; the schismatical spirit of the Greeks; the heresies which have crept in, especially in Lombardy; the seizure of Jerusalem by the Kharizmians; the active enmity of the Emperor to the Church, which he is especially bound to protect." On this last score he enlarged with such eloquence as to move himself and his hearers to tears.

From pathos he proceeded to bitter invective and accusation. The Emperor, he said, had trifled with the unclean thing: he had built a city in his realm, had peopled it with Saracens and allowed them to exercise, even joined in, their superstitious rites. He had contracted a familiar friendship with the Sultan of Cairo and other infidel Princes. He had shamelessly polluted himself with Saracen women, whom he maintained in his harem. He had been many times guilty of perjury and had sworn to the Church things which he refused to perform. Of this the Pope had damning evidence in the shape of numerous letters sealed with the Imperial seal.

Here Thaddaeus rose from his seat. He, too, could produce his proofs, letters sealed with the Papal seal which contained no less certain evidence of the Pope's dishonesty. The obsequious assembly professed to scrutinise these letters and arrived at the dutiful conclusion that all the promises contained in the Emperor's letters were absolute, all those in the Papal letters conditional. Thaddaeus refused to accept such a judgment and declared that the Emperor had been justified in any seeming lapses from

the honourable fulfilment of his word by the Pope's own perjuries. "As to the charge of heresy made against my Lord, for this no one can answer but himself: he must be present to declare his creed: who shall presume to read the secrets of his heart? But"—and he regarded the Pope and his Cardinals with accusing eyes—"that he is no heretic you may judge from this fact: he will not allow any usurer to dwell in his dominions." The Pope and his creatures frowned uncomfortably when thus reminded of the particular heresy which all Christendom imputed to the Court of Rome.

"My master," he continued, "only uses common prudence in cherishing the alliance of Egypt. He allows Saracens to dwell in his realm in order to put down sedition: he employs them in his expeditions as soldiers because he thinks that the blood of these infidels is not so precious as that of Christian soldiers. He does not indulge in sinful intercourse with Saracen harlots—who can prove it? but he amuses himself with the jests and certain feats of some women, whom he has now, however, sent away, because they created suspicion."

Thaddaeus then requested that the next session of the Council should be postponed, so that he might obtain fuller powers from the Emperor, or so that the Emperor himself might come to Lyons. "Now God forbid!" exclaimed the Pope. "I have already had trouble enough to escape his snares; and if he comes I will go. I do not wish for blood, and I do not feel myself fit or ready for martyrdom or imprisonment." The French and English envoys, however, insisted that such a post-

ponement was just, and Innocent was forced to consent to an adjournment of fourteen days.

If Frederick had come to Lyons, if the arch-culprit himself had appeared to justify himself before the representatives of Christendom, then the vast pageant of the world's history would have been enriched by one more grand and moving scene. The lively imagination cannot but glow at the vision conjured up by such a meeting. Frederick, the greatest if not the most powerful of the Mediæval Emperors, faces Innocent, the most implacable of the Popes. The two enemies personify in their mortal combat the culmination of the long and bitter strife between the Empire and the Papacy. The greatly persecuted Emperor, curbing, it may be, for a while his haughty spirit, appeals for peace, refutes the accusations against him with calm and majestic dignity, protests his faithfulness to the Church's creed, and scorns the slanders that have tainted him with infidel beliefs. The proud Innocent will hear nothing of peace at so late an hour: he sweeps aside his opponents' denials, heaps charge upon charge, invective upon invective. The Emperor casts aside his restraint, hurls back accusation for accusation, enlarges upon the notorious rapacity of the Roman See, its ungodly ambition and covetuousness, its alliance with the Lombard heretics, its malignant hatred of one who would else have been its most faithful son.

The air is surcharged with venom, electric with tense emotion, heavy with portent. The vast assembly hearkens to the duel of words with bated breath, dreads

the moment when upon itself shall fall the onerous duty of pronouncing between these two. For, since the Emperor himself is there, the ultimate judgment must rest with the Council : the Pope cannot, dare not presume to take for granted its dutiful acquiescence in his declaration of the Emperor's guilt. What will be the verdict of the Council ? The lay envoys, who might be expected to take Frederick's side, are in a minority and among them are the ambassadors of Genoa, Venice and other states in open warfare against him. The preponderant body of Churchmen are bound in some measure by their holy calling to obey their Head, are exposed to his favour or resentment, are mindful of the manner in which Frederick has exacted from their brethren in Sicily the obedience and financial burdens which are due to him from his lay subjects. Can the Emperor so sway them by his eloquence, so impress them with the justice of his cause, as to make them forget these things ? To that question no answer can be given : there are bounds beyond which the imagination of the writer may not legitimately stray.

But Frederick did not go to Lyons. Doubtless he knew in his own mind that even his own presence could not avert his condemnation by such an assembly ; and it would be hard for him, after he had himself pleaded his cause before the Council and thus tacitly recognised its authority, to deny the validity of its sentence. His pride revolted, moreover, at submitting himself to the censure of meaner men. Who were these Prelates, he asked, that they should presume to sit in judgment on the Emperor

of Rome, on one who was answerable to none but God ? "I see as clear as the light," he said, "that the Pope is eager to revenge himself upon me, because I caused his kinsmen, Genoese pirates, old enemies of the Empire, to be seized at sea and imprisoned, together with their abettors the Prelates. It is plain that he has called the Council for no other purpose than to work my ruin ; and it is not meet that the Empire should be bound by the decision of a hostile synod."

Such an answer could do his cause no good. The pride of many was ruffled by his refusal to recognise the authority of the Council and his enemies were emboldened to say aloud that his absence was proof of his guilt. At the next session on July 17th accusations poured in against him, for there were many of the Prelates who had suffered imprisonment at his hands and not a few others were his bitter foes. The Bishop of Catana denounced him as a heretic, an Epicurean, an atheist, an oppressor of the Church. "I can no longer keep silence," cried Thaddaeus, bold as a lion in his defence of his absent Lord. "You are unworthy of belief. You are the son of a traitor legally convicted and hung by the Emperor ; and you tread in your father's footsteps."

The Bishop was silenced but others arose to confront the dauntless envoy. The sacrilegious capture of Gregory's Council, in which some Prelates had lost their lives in the fury of the naval engagement, was the Emperor's worst crime in the eyes of the assembly. "My Lord," said Thaddaeus, "is truly sorry for that

affair, which happened by chance and contrary to his intentions; had he been present at the battle no Prelates or Churchmen should have suffered bodily harm, but in a sudden and fierce engagement by sea his servants could not discriminate between the innocent and the guilty."

"Why did he not allow the innocent to depart free after the seizure, and retain only the others?" demanded the Pope.

"It must be remembered," answered Thaddaeus, "that Pope Gregory called to Rome the open enemies of the Empire, such as the Count of Provence and the men of Milan. This was not to promote peace but to stir up sedition. Thereupon my Lord the Emperor sent letters to England as well as to other countries, begging the Prelates in a friendly way not to come to such a treacherous council; warning them beforehand that if they did come with the enemies of himself and the Empire, they would be attacked: he also refused them safe transit through his dominions and civilly forewarned them of the impending danger.

"God delivered them into the hands of my master," he continued haughtily; "God took away the strength of the rebels and of them who had despised the Emperor, and showed by His abandonment that their imprisonment was just. Yet, angered as he was, he remembered mercy, and, softened by the counsels of his faithful advisers, wished to dismiss those Prelates, and other unwarlike persons, in peace; when lo the Bishop of Praeneste and some other saucy Prelates, heaping threat

upon threat, although prisoners, hesitated not to excommunicate the Emperor before his face, heedless of that salutary counsel, 'Humble yourselves to the hand of power.' Thus from being rebels they became ridiculous and even imbecile, and from being friends, enemies, and deserved imprisonment."

"Your Lord the Emperor," said Innocent, "ought to have been convinced, unless he distrusted his own cause, that such a large assembly of such good men would rather have released than bound him, if he deserved to be released. But from his proceedings it plainly appears that his conscience gnawed him, and the offence of which he was guilty wounded him."

"What then could my Lord hope from such a council," Thaddaeus replied, "in which presided his greatest enemy, Pope Gregory, or from judges who even from their prison breathed forth nothing but menace?"

"If one has broken out into violence," was Innocent's answer, "all should not have been treated with this indignity. Nothing remains but ignominiously to depose a man laden with such manifold offences."

The English envoys protested in vain that the Emperor's children should not be disinherited for their father's sins. Thaddaeus saw that all hope was gone. Yet he would not tamely accept his defeat. "I appeal from this Council, from which there are absent so many great Prelates and secular Princes, to a general and impartial Council. I appeal from this Pope, the declared enemy of my Lord, to a future, more gentle, more Christian Pope."

Innocent disdainfully swept the appeal aside. "This General Council of the many Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and other nobles from various parts of the world, who have all been waiting for your Lord the Emperor to humble himself, is fully satisfied; those who are absent are prevented from attending by becoming ensnared in the toils laid by your master. Therefore it is not proper for the sentence of deposition to be any longer delayed, lest he should profit by his malice. And now," he taunted, "let your Lord come."

"Ay, my Lord will come," cried Thaddaeus. "The day of his deposition, if that be decreed, may be called that day of wrath, that day of tribulation, that day of calamity and misery, a day too great and too bitter."

One Prelate alone, the German Berthold, Patriarch of Aquilea, raised his voice against the impending sentence. "Remember," he said, "that the pillars which uphold the world are two: the one the Pope, the other the Emperor."

"Either hold your tongue," answered Innocent savagely, "or I will take away your ring." He would hear no more words in defence of the Emperor. He would not condescend to consult the Council, to invite the votes of the Prelates and envoys. They were there merely to lend solemnity to the sentence which he should pronounce. That sentence was already inscribed on parchment, drawn up and decided before the Imperial ambassador had completed his defence, no doubt before ever the Council had assembled. Without

further deliberation he proceeded to issue his irrevocable decree.

It was prefaced by a long recapitulation of the culprit's sins, in which there was some little truth, much exaggeration and more deliberate falsehood. He first enlarged upon the Emperor's persistent refusal to make peace and his constant violation of his oaths. "Wherefore, as we are neither willing nor able, without serious offence to Jesus Christ, any longer to tolerate his iniquities and offences, we are in conscience compelled to proceed against him.

"To be silent for the present on his other crimes and iniquities, he has committed four most heavy offences, which cannot be excused by any palliation. He has rashly broken his oaths between the Church and the Empire. He has been guilty of sacrilege, in causing the capture of the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, the Prelates and clerks of other Churches, religious men, and seculars, who were coming to the Council which our predecessor had thought proper to convoke.

"He is also suspected of heresy; not on dubious and light grounds, but by evident proofs. And that he has committed many acts of perjury is sufficiently clear, for when formerly he was staying in Sicily, before he was elected to the Imperial dignity, he, in the presence of the Legate of the Apostolic See, gave an oath of allegiance to our predecessor, the Pope Innocent the Third, of happy memory, and to his successors, and also to the Church of Rome, in consideration of the cession of the Kingdom of Sicily to him by the said Church. And, as

is reported, he, after he had been elected to the said dignity, renewed that oath before the said Innocent and his Cardinals and did legal homage to the said Pope with uplifted hands. After this, when he was in Germany, he, in the presence of the Princes and nobles of the Empire, made oath to the said Pope Innocent, and after his decease to Pope Honorius and to his successors, to preserve and protect, as far as lay in his power, the honours, rights, and possessions of the Roman Church.

" But of these oaths he has proved himself the daring and dangerous violator; thus incurring the stain of treachery and the charge of treason. For he sent to the Cardinals letters containing threats against our predecessor Gregory and presumed to defame him and slander him in manifold ways throughout the world. He has also ordered the persons of our venerable brother Otho, Bishop of Porto, and of the Bishop of Praeneste, the Legates of the Apostolic See and high members of the Roman Church, to be seized on, imprisoned and themselves deprived of all their goods.

" He has moreover endeavoured with all his power to diminish, or to deprive the Church altogether of the privilege which our Lord Jesus Christ granted to St. Peter and to his successors; namely that ' Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall also be loosed in heaven ' (in which privilege rests the power and authority of the Roman Church); and, writing word that he did not regard the sentence of excommunication pronounced against him by Pope Gregory, he, despising the keys of

the Church, not only did not observe it himself, but also, by means of his officials, compelled others to disregard that sentence and the sentence of interdict, which he himself altogether despised.

"The possessions also of the Roman Church, namely, the March and the duchy of Benevento, and other possessions which she held in parts of Tuscany and Lombardy, and some other places, with a few exceptions, he dared to occupy and still holds them. And as if that was not sufficient, he, either by himself or by his officials, compelled the inhabitants of those possessions to take an oath; absolved them, although he had no right to do so, from the oath of fealty by which they were bound to the Roman Church; and after making them abjure the said oath of fealty, he compelled them to make oaths of allegiance to himself.

"Touching the evil he has wrought to the Church in his Kingdom, there are eleven archiepiscopal sees and a great many episcopal sees, as well as abbacies and other churches, at present vacant in the aforesaid Kingdom, and through his means they have been for a long time destitute of the management of Prelates, to the great injury of the churches themselves and to the peril of many souls. He has not only caused the substance and goods of the churches of the said Kingdom to be taken possession of at his pleasure, but has carried off the crosses, chalices and other holy treasures belonging to them, as if a despiser of the divine worship. Clerks are oppressed in manifold ways by collections and talliages, and not only are they dragged before a secular tribunal,

but even, as it is reported, they are compelled to undergo the ordeal of single combat; they are imprisoned, slain and tortured on gibbets, to the confusion and disgrace of the whole clerical order.

"That he has been guilty of sacrilege is certain; for when the aforesaid Bishops of Porto and Praeneste, and several Prelates and clerks of the churches, as well as religious men and seculars, were coming by water to the Apostolic See for the purpose of attending the Council (which he, the Emperor, had asked to be convoked) all the roads of his territory were altogether stopped by his command; and having sent his son Enzio with a number of galleys in order to vent his anger upon them, he dared to lay his sacrilegious hands upon them, some of the Prelates and other persons being drowned, some slain, and the others put to flight. The others were ignominiously imprisoned in the Kingdom of Sicily, and some of them, worn away by sickness and oppressed by want, have fallen away to a wretched condition.

"With good cause, moreover, has a suspicion of heresy arisen against him, for after he had incurred the sentence of excommunication he despised and still despises the keys of the Church, causing divine service to be performed, or rather profaned, before him. Besides, he is united by a detestable alliance with the Saracens; he embraces their customs, notoriously keeping them with him in his daily service, and after their fashion, he shamelessly appoints as guards over his wives, whom he has received from the descendants of a royal race, certain eunuchs especially those whom he has lately caused to be

castrated; and what is a more execrable offence, he, when formerly in Palestine, made a kind of arrangement or collusion with the Sultan, and allowed the name of Mahomet to be publicly proclaimed in the temple of the Lord day and night.

"He also, in opposition to the Christians, abuses the pernicious and horrid rites of other infidels, and entering into an alliance of friendship with those who wickedly pay little respect to the Apostolic See and have seceded from the unity of the Church, he caused, as is positively asserted, the Duke of Bavaria, of illustrious memory, to be murdered by assassins. He has also given a daughter in marriage to Vattacus, the schismatic of Constantinople, who was solemnly expelled from the communion of Christians by excommunication.

"Rejecting the proceedings and customs of Catholic Princes, neglecting his own salvation and the purity of his fame, he does not employ himself in works of piety; and what is more he does not trouble to relieve those oppressed by injuries, by extending his hand to bestow alms, although he has eagerly aimed at the destruction of the churches, and has crushed ecclesiastical persons with the burden and persecution of his yoke: and it is not discovered that he has ever built or founded either churches, monasteries, hospitals, or other pious places.

"Now these then are not light but convincing grounds for suspicions of heresy being entertained against him. Besides this, the Kingdom of Sicily, which is the spiritual patrimony of St. Peter, and which he holds in fee from the Apostolic See, has been reduced by him to

wretchedness and slavery. He has also omitted to pay the annual tribute of a thousand sequins, in which he is bound to the Roman Church for the tenure of the said Kingdom."

The Pope rose from his throne; his Cardinals rose around him. Each bore in his hand a lighted torch wherewith to perform the last impressive rites of the portentous scene. In solemn, measured utterance Innocent proceeded to strip the Emperor of all his earthly pomp.

"We, therefore, having maturely and carefully deliberated with our brother Cardinals and the holy Council on the above-named and other nefarious deeds of his, seeing that we, unworthy as we are, hold on earth the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said to us in the person of St. Peter, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,' do hereby declare the above-named Prince, who has rendered himself unworthy of the honours of sovereignty, for his crimes to be deposed from his throne by God, to be bound by his sins and cast off by the Lord, and to be deprived of all his honours; and we do hereby sentence and deprive him. And all who are in any way bound to him by an oath of allegiance, we for ever absolve and release from that oath, and by the apostolic authority strictly forbid anyone from obeying him, or in any way whatever attempting to obey him as an Emperor or King. And we decree that anyone who shall from henceforth give him assistance or advice, or show favour to him as an Emperor

or King, shall by so doing be excommunicated. And those in the Empire on whom devolves the election of an Emperor may freely elect a successor. With respect to the Kingdom of Sicily, we, with the advice of our Cardinals, will make such provision as may seem expedient unto us."

The assembly sat silent and stricken with awe. The Imperial envoys groaned aloud and beat their breasts. "Oh, day of wrath, of tribulation, and of agony!" cried Thaddaeus. "Now will the heretics rejoice, the Kharismians prevail, the foul Tartars pursue their devastations."

"I have done my part," said Innocent. "God must do the rest." He chanted the first line of the hymn, "We praise thee, O God!" Quaveringly at first, then exultantly, the enemies of the Emperor lifted up their voices in his wake. The hymn ended and the Pope and his Cardinals beat out their torches on the ground. As the last flame died out he uttered his final malediction: "So be the glory and the fortune of the Emperor extinguished upon the earth."

Chapter XV

THE DEPOSED EMPEROR

FREDERICK was enthroned amidst a splendid Court when the tidings of his deposition were brought to him at Turin. His eyes flashed anger and his voice trembled with a mighty rage. "The Pope has deprived me of my crown?" he exclaimed. "Whence this presumption, this audacity? Bring hither my treasure chests." He opened them. "Not one of my crowns but is here." He took out the crown of the Empire, placed it upon his head, and rose from his throne. "I hold my crown of God alone," he cried, "and neither the Pope, the Council, nor the devil shall rend it from me. Does he, in his vulgar pride, think that he shall hurl me from the Imperial dignity; me, who am the chief Prince of the world, yea, who am without an equal? I am now released from all respect; I am set free from all ties of love and peace; no longer need I keep any measure against this man."

He straightway despatched his envoys to all the Kings and Princes of Christendom. "What may not all Kings fear from the presumption of a Pope like Innocent the Fourth?" he declared, in the proclamation which they bore. "We grant the Pope's spiritual power, but we nowhere read that he may transfer Empires at his plea-

sure, or rob the Kings of their realms. Is he set above all law and order ? He has disregarded every legal form in his late proceedings against us, and has taken hearsay to be fact. How long has the word of an Emperor been so despicable as not to be heard against that of a priest ? A very few unjust witnesses stood forward against us, such as the Bishop of Catana, the son of a traitor, or the Spanish Prelates who knew nothing of the affairs of Italy and were our enemies owing to the poisonous suborning practised upon them. Not one of our German Princes, who have the right of electing and deposing us, was at hand to confirm the sentence. The utter falsehood of all the charges made against us was proved by irrefragible documents. But were they all true, how would they justify the monstrous absurdity that the Emperor, in whom dwells the supreme majesty, can be adjudged guilty of high treason ? That he, who as the source of law is above all law, should be subject to law ? To condemn him to temporal penalties who has but one superior in temporal things, God ! We submit ourselves in spiritual things not only to the Pope, but to the humblest priest. But alas ! how unlike are the clergy of our own day to those of the primitive Church, who led Apostolic lives, imitating the humility of our Lord ! Then they were visited of angels, then shone around them miracles, then did they heal the sick and raise the dead, and subdue Princes by their holiness, not by arms. Now they are abandoned to this world, and to drunkenness ; their religion is choked by their riches. It were a good work to relieve them from the noxious wealth ; it

is the interest of all Princes to deprive them of these vain superfluities, to compel them to salutary poverty."

In the indicting of this letter Frederick sacrificed his discretion to his wrath. In all his attacks upon the Pope he had hitherto been careful to insist that his quarrel was not with the Church but with its head. Now, however, he included the whole body of the clergy in his resentment, declaimed against their unnatural wealth, and invited his brother monarchs to co-operate with him in reducing them to a more humble state. The inevitable result was that almost the whole body of the clergy of Christendom was henceforth bitterly hostile to him. Matthew Paris reflects this animosity in his chronicle and is highly indignant with the Emperor. "When the news reached the ears of the Christian Kings of France and England, it appeared as clear as the light to them and their nobles that Frederick was endeavouring to destroy the liberty and nobility of the Church; and by this very fact rendering himself suspected of heresy, he had, by his impudence and shamelessness, extinguished and destroyed every spark of good opinion and respect for his wisdom, which had hitherto existed among the people.

"However," continues the sagacious monk, "there was one grievous wound which pressed upon Princes as well as Prelates, in a heavier degree than all others; this was, that although the Emperor Frederick was deserving, on many accounts, of being humbled and deprived of all his honours, yet if, by God's assistance, the Papal authority should irrevocably depose him, the

Roman See abusing God's favour, would in future be puffed up to such a degree of haughtiness and intolerable pride that it would, on some light cause or other, either depose Catholic chiefs—especially Prelates—although innocent, or opprobriously threaten to depose them; and the Roman Pontiffs, although sprung from plebeian blood, would, with lofty talk and boasting, exclaim, 'We have trodden down the most powerful Emperor Frederick, and who are you that rashly think to resist us?'"

The Pope himself realised that this fear must be allayed. His answering manifesto opened in tones lofty enough, but ended with an assurance that other monarchs were safe from such a sentence as he had passed upon the Emperor. "When the sick man who has scorned milder remedies is subjected to the knife and the cautery, he complains of the cruelty of the physician: when the evildoer, who has despised all warning, is at length punished, he arraigns the judge. But the physician only looks to the welfare of the sick man, the judge regards the crime, not the person of the criminal. The Emperor doubts and denies that all things and all men are subject to the See of Rome. As if we who are to judge angels are not to give sentence on all earthly things! In the Old Testament priests dethroned unworthy Kings: how much more is the Vicar of Christ justified in proceeding against him who, expelled from the Church as a heretic, is already the portion of hell. Ignorant persons aver that Constantine first gave temporal power to the See of Rome; it was already bestowed by Christ Himself, as

inalienable from its nature, and absolutely unconditional. Christ founded not only a pontifical but a royal sovereignty. Constantine humbly gave up to the Church an unlawful tyranny, and received back from Christ's Vicar a power divinely ordained for the punishment of the bad, and the reward of the good. Peter was not bidden to throw away his sword, but to put it up into its sheath ; by these words we see that it was to him that the sword belonged, and he it was who had the right of using it. The power of the sword, lodged in the Church, is bestowed upon the Emperor. This is typified in his Coronation rite : the Pope delivers to Cæsar a sheathed sword, which the Prince draws and brandishes, in token that he has received the power of using it.

" Let not other Kings take alarm ; our authority over them is not the same as over the Prince of the Romans, who takes an oath to the Roman Pontiff. Other Kings have an hereditary right to their Crowns, but the Roman Emperor is chosen King by the free vote of the Germans, and is afterwards promoted to the Empire by us. It was the Apostolic See that transferred the Empire from the Greeks to the Germans. We have also special power with respect to the Crown of Sicily, which is our own fief."

Both parties in their letters courted the active assistance as well as the approval of foreign monarchs ; but those Princes were too wise or too cautious to plunge into the immitigable strife. If they aided the Pope they helped to elevate a power which might afterwards crush them in turn ; if they espoused the cause of the

Emperor they invoked the anathemas of the Pope. Better to stand apart from the fray, to devote themselves to the work which lay nearer to their hands, and to watch the two mighty forces rending each other in their mortal struggle.

That struggle became more fierce and sanguinary now. The Emperor was fighting for his life. His heart was bitter with hatred of the foe who had so relentlessly pursued him. The taint of cruelty which was never absent from the Hohenstaufen blood gained the ascendancy; he became ruthless and terrible in his revenge. It became a war in which little quarter was asked or given, for the Pope, by asserting his power to break all treaties, left little room for mercy. A town might pledge its word to the Emperor to fulfil conditions and abstain from enmity, but of what use to talk of terms when, as soon as the Emperor should have withdrawn his armies, the Pope would absolve that city from its oath?

Innocent sent his Legates into every corner of the Empire, bidding all faithful Christians to cast off the yoke of the man who was no longer their Lord. They need have no fear, they were assured, that the Pope would ever make peace with the Emperor and abandon them to his vengeance. "No feigned penitence, no simulated humility shall so deceive us, as that when he is cast down from the height of his Imperial and royal dignity he should be restored to his throne. His sentence is absolutely irrevocable! His reprobation is the voice of God by his Church! He is condemned and for ever! His viper progeny are included in this eternal

proscription. Whoever loves justice should rejoice that vengeance is thus declared against the common enemy, and wash his hands in the blood of the transgressor." These last words seemed directly to encourage the assassination of the Emperor and they soon bore fruit.

Frederick, too, had his weapons to wield. He levied a tax of one-third upon the possessions of every cleric and religious community throughout his Kingdom. He commanded that any ecclesiastic who, in obedience to the Papal mandate, should refuse to celebrate Mass or to perform other holy offices, should be banished and despoiled : while all those who adhered to his cause should receive his special favour and protection. The friars must be cast out from the borders of his realm, since from them he could expect nothing but the most diligent enmity.

In the September of this year, 1245, he left Turin, where the above enactments had been issued, and marched to Parma and Cremona. Both cities received him with apparently undiminished loyalty, though a plot against his life was discovered in which some few Parmesans were implicated. While in the north he made another attempt to destroy the city of Brescia, but the Lombards turned out in force against him and held the fords of the river Ticinello which he must cross to reach the town. He abandoned the campaign in November, but not before he had inflicted a heavy loss upon the rebels : his son Enzio captured 1300 of their infantry and forty knights who had taken shelter in a strong castle. The winter months

were spent in Tuscany, over which the Emperor's natural son, Frederick of Antioch, was made Imperial Vicar.

A great danger called him back to the Kingdom in the spring of 1246. The machinations of Innocent had raised up a powerful conspiracy against him, a conspiracy that aimed not merely at his possessions but at his life. The plotters were many of them nobles of high position : Pandulf of Fasanella had been his Vicar in Tuscany ; Andrew of Cicala was the Captain-General of Apulia ; James of Morra was the son of Frederick's chief-justiciary : there were also Theobald Francesco, who had been Podesta of Parma, and William of Sanseverino and his sons. The plot was betrayed to Frederick by one of the conspirators, and for some time he refused to credit the tale. But the sudden flight of Pandulf and James from his Court convinced him. They found refuge at Rome and from there informed their fellow-traitors, who were daily expecting to hear that Frederick's murder had been accomplished, that the Emperor had discovered their secret plans.

The guilty nobles shut themselves in the two castles of Scala and Capaccio and spread the report that Frederick was dead, which caused a rising among the populace. The arrival of the Emperor on the scene quickly produced order and the traitors were besieged. The castle of Scala made a short resistance : that of Capaccio held out for three months. Some of the captives, before they died, confessed that the Pope had instigated them in their treacherous designs on Frederick's life.

The vengeance of Frederick was fearful enough. The

plotters were blinded, disfigured and maimed. He had a mind to send them in this wretched state around the Courts of Europe as a forcible testimony of the Pope's murderous plans and of the retribution which all those should find who sought to "wash their hands in the blood of the transgressor." But he desisted from this drastic step and the victims were put out of their misery by being broken on the wheel. Their fate seems barbarous to the mind of a more gentle age, but we can judge from the friar Salimbene that it seemed only just in those times. "The Princes of the Kingdom," he writes, "whom Frederick had raised from nothing and had exalted from the dust, lifted their heels against him; they kept no faith with him but betrayed him. There was no wisdom in those who thought themselves wise. I knew them: they suddenly vanished from the world, and for the most part made a wretched end of their lives, because they walked after vanity."

The Pope, whether truly or falsely, denied all complicity in this plot, and accused Frederick in turn of designs upon his own life. Two murderers, it was said, were sent by the Emperor to the Roman Court for the purpose of killing the Pope by secret treachery. Their purpose was discovered and they were cast into prison. "There were some, however, who said that this report was cunningly invented and fraudulently arranged, in order that Frederick, who declared that it was by the Pope's contrivance that a similar occurrence had lately happened to him, might be defamed by a similar crime." [1]

[1] Matthew Paris.

Two other conspiracies were also detected against Innocent in which Ghibellines were involved, but neither could be traced to the Emperor's instigation. It is improbable that he would resort to such means as this, for the assassination of the Pope by his orders would call down upon him the unanimous execration of Christendom, and all but the most fanatical or unscrupulous of his supporters would desert him in the struggle that must be taken up by Innocent's successor.

In Germany, meanwhile, the Pope was strenuously endeavouring to destroy Frederick's power and fanning those flames of civil war which had blazed up after the Emperor's second excommunication. Albert von Beham was his agent among the great of the land, the friars among the populace and the towns. A Crusade was declared against the Church's foe, and a Papal bull forbade anyone to journey to the Holy Land and fight against the Infidels when there was a more evil enemy of religion vexing the Church at home.

The result of the sentence of the Council of Lyons was to cause many of the Prelates to desert the Emperor ; while the great Princes, who had formerly lent an ear to the Pope's beguilings, now returned to their loyalty. Otho of Bavaria, who had for some time dallied with the offer of the Imperial Crown, now refused it with uncompromising finality. He cast in his lot openly with the deposed Hohenstaufen by giving his daughter in marriage to King Conrad.

The Papal party cast around for another powerful Prince to set up as King of the Germans, and subse-

quently as Emperor of Rome, in Frederick's place. Some were too loyal, others too fearful of endeavouring to supplant a sovereign whose name was still held in awe. The papal offers were rejected with contempt by the King of Bohemia, the Dukes of Austria, Brabant and Saxony, the Margraves of Meissen and Brandenburg. Finally, Henry Raspe, the Landgrave of Thuringia, yielded to the persuasions and commands of Innocent. "I will be crowned Emperor," he said, "but I shall not live a year."

Innocent threw all his energies into the task of furthering the cause of his puppet. A stream of English gold flowed from Lyons to Germany and was there distributed with a lavish hand. The Princes and Prelates of the Empire were bidden to elect Henry as King. The Princes scorned to obey, but the Prelates were no longer loyal to their Kaiser. The Archbishops of Mentz, Cologne, Treves and Bremen, the Bishops of Metz, Spiers and Strasburg, gathered together on May the 22nd, and chose Henry of Thuringia as King and Emperor-elect.

Such an election could not be valid, and the partisans of Frederick scoffed at Henry as the priest's king. But a powerful army assembled under his leadership and defeated Conrad in a great battle near Frankfort. His triumph was short-lived. The towns would nowhere submit to him, and in a few months Conrad had assembled another force of 15,000 men. The Papal champion and the son of Frederick met again in a bloody battle near the town of Ulm and the Imperialists gained a

decisive victory. Henry fled to his home in Thuringia and died on February 17th, 1247, nine months after his election.

The Papalists then endeavoured to seduce Conrad from his allegiance to the Emperor : it was not the first time that the Vicars of Christ had incited the son to rise against the father. But Conrad rejected their efforts with scorn. Innocent invited the King of Norway and the King of Denmark to fill Henry's place, but neither would accept the perilous honour. It was at last accepted by William, Count of Holland, an ambitious youth of twenty years of age. He was elected King of the Romans by three Archbishops and a few Bishops and Princes on Christmas Day, 1247.

There remained still to crown him. He advanced to Aix-la-Chapelle, but the burghers of the Imperial city of Charlemagne shut their gates against the usurper. For six months they endured a siege, until their provisions had failed and the walls were crumbling to pieces. They lost heart when the false report was spread that their Hohenstaufen Kaiser was dead, and yielded upon fair conditions. William of Holland was crowned by the Papal Legate in the ancient church which, thirty-two years before, had witnessed the coronation of Frederick.

The star of the house of Hohenstaufens had already begun to set, and from henceforth Conrad slowly but surely lost ground. A blight seemed to settle upon Germany. The partisans of Innocent and Frederick were unceasingly at strife. Three of her great Princes,

the Duke of Austria, the Landgrave of Thuringia and the Duke of Meran died without male issue and their relations fought wildly amongst themselves for the succession. Every house seemed to be divided against itself. The old policy of the Popes, to weaken the power of the Emperors by fostering internecine strife in their dominions, was yielding a rich harvest of discord and desolation.

Frederick, meanwhile, after having crushed the conspiracy of the nobles of Sicily, was taking a few months of rest in his Kingdom before setting forth on the final stage of the great struggle. The future might seem hopeless enough to him. With the half of Germany arrayed against his cause, with the resources of his Kingdom strained to their utmost in the maintenance of his armies, the task of re-establishing his authority in every corner of his vast dominions was beyond his power.

Against him were arrayed many forces ; the fanaticism inspired by a blind and unquestioning belief in the infallibility of the Pope, through which he himself must be regarded as the accursed enemy of God and the Church ; the more timid fear of the devout, which rendered them unwilling to serve a master when thereby they invoked upon themselves the condemnation and anathema of the Pope ; the cupidity of baser men whose loyalty was no proof against the allurement of the Papal gold ; the self-interest of others who hoped to profit by anarchy and confusion to extend their own authority and possessions. In his own support he could count only personal devotion, unswerving loyalty and the same

emotion which inspired himself, the passionate detestation of priestly tyranny. It is wonderful enough that, in an age of superstition and credulity, so many could be found ready to imperil their souls in his service.

The very nature of the warfare in which he was involved rendered a speedy culmination impossible, unless he himself should be crushed into the dust or released from his burden by death. His enemies in Northern Italy would never give him the opportunity to overthrow their power in one decisive battle. His more awful adversary could never be brought to submission. Frederick might overrun the Papal territories, might destroy a few Lombard towns. But Innocent would still sit at Lyons, unassailable, unrelenting and unsubdued. The tribute of Christendom would continue to flow into his coffers, would be employed to support mercenary armies, to encourage and fortify the old enemies of the Emperor, to raise up new champions of the Church.

Yet to Frederick, though he realised the hopelessness of his cause and the weary road he must travel for the remainder of his years, there came no thought of abandoning the struggle. He was seized, instead, with an irresolution almost inevitable, for he knew not against which of his many foes to direct his arms. If he gathered all his might together and advanced upon Milan, bent upon utterly destroying this most aggressive of his Lombard enemies, he must prepare for a siege of many months' duration: and meanwhile his other adversaries would profit by his preoccupation to invade his own territories

or to attack the loyal Ghibelline states in their neighbourhood. If he entered Germany to assist his son Conrad in the war against the Papal intruder, then the rebels in Northern Italy would redouble their energies, relieved from the menace of his proximity.

There seemed only one course, and that a desperate one, by which Frederick might strike a decisive blow. He might march to Lyons at the head of his armies, appear in person before the face of his arch enemy, and either wrest justice from him by force, or lead him back a captive into his Kingdom. Such a course would be dramatic and impressive, but it would be attended by grave dangers. It might incur the national resentment of France, for Lyons, though nominally an Imperial city, was French in the sentiments of patriotic Frenchmen. There were many in Christendom, moreover, who though they might deprecate the harshness and ambition of Innocent, would yet be aroused to active sympathy if he suffered the personal indignity of compulsion or captivity.

Frederick nevertheless decided to march to Lyons. He advanced northwards to Turin in May, 1247, with stores of treasure and many thousand knights. He declared that he would bring his cause before the Pope and before the world : he talked of appearing in Germany with the Pope in his train. Innocent cried to France for succour, and his appeal was answered. Louis had befriended the Emperor in some measure, but he was too pious to be his friend in all things : the actions of Innocent might be subject to condemnation and reproof,

but the person of the Vicar of Christ must remain inviolate. The French king offered to lead his chivalry to Lyons when the Pope should need his protection.

Frederick still persisted in his design. He made a compact with the Count of Savoy which ensured him an undisputed crossing of the Alpine passes. Further to the west the Count of Vienne promised to aid him to the utmost of his power. He appointed Chambery as the meeting-place between himself and his Transalpine subjects and allies. It seemed probable that the strife would become international, that the armies of France would meet the armies of the Emperor before the city of Lyons.

But the Pope had other weapons to wield. He had many friends among the great Guelfic houses of Italy and not a few in the Imperialist town of Parma. Some of these had been lately expelled by the Emperor for plotting against his life. With the influence of the Pope added to their persuasions, they succeeded in gaining the connivance of their friends inside the walls to their plans. They appeared before Parma with a strong force of mercenaries, hired by the gold of Innocent. The Imperial Captain sallied forth to give them battle, was defeated and slain. The victorious exiles found the gates opened to them, took possession of the citadel, won the enthusiasm of the fickle populace, and Parma was no longer an Imperialist city.

Chapter XVI

THE GATHERING OF THE CLOUDS

THE revolt of Parma called for Frederick's immediate presence and he was compelled to abandon his march to Lyons. He turned back from Turin with black rage in his heart and swore to visit the traitor city with a terrible vengeance. From the days of his grandfather, Barbarossa, the Emperors had cherished Parma as a city-state whose loyalty was excelled by none in Northern Italy, and the Parmese had ever been foremost in sending their knights to aid the Emperors against their foes. Frederick himself had been lavish with his favours to the city, had extended its territories and enlarged its privileges. If Parma had turned against him, where could he look for loyalty and faith ?

The defection of the city was a severe blow to his material power. Many great roads, of commercial and strategical importance, converged on to its market-place. Its territories, situated in the fertile valley of the Po, yielded a rich harvest of grain. The wealth of its merchants enabled it to put a large force of soldiers into the field. Its walls were stout, the hearts of its citizens stouter still.

The accession of so powerful an ally gave fresh courage to the Guelfs, and reinforcements soon com-

menced to pour into the city, which was preparing for the inevitable siege. The Count of San Bonifazio arrived with his Mantuan levies. Three hundred knights, with their attendant infantry, came from Piacenza. The Legate Gregory of Montelengo brought a thousand knights from Milan. The Marquess of Este brought more troops from Ferrara. Genoa sent three hundred crossbowmen and the Count of Lavagna a larger force. Parma herself contributed a thousand knights. Walls which were defended by such a garrison were not likely to be quickly overthrown.

The Emperor arrived at Cremona on the last day of June, and was joined by Eccelin de Romano, who had hastened thither from the Trevisan March. King Enzio was already in the neighbourhood, with Count Lancia and every man that Cremona could furnish under his banner. Frederick of Antioch came from Tuscany. There were men from Apulia, Burgundy and Germany, and a great force of Frederick's Saracen soldiers. The Imperial army numbered ten thousand knights, and a countless host of infantry and bowmen.

The beleaguer of so large a city as Parma, whose forces were concentrated while those of Frederick were dispersed in the effort to encircle the walls, was a long and laborious process. Many were the skirmishes and conflicts, stubborn defences of roads and bridges, desperate endeavours to break the ring of the besieging army. Victory in these minor engagements fell now to one side, now to the other. But slowly and surely every means of communication between the city and the outer

world was barred by the Emperor's captains, and the citizens began to grow fearful as their reserves of food and water dwindled away.

If Frederick, hardened and embittered by the adverse incidents of recent years and mightily incensed against the Parmese themselves, was cruel and merciless in his warfare, his enemies were no more gentle in their methods. He conceived the idea of demonstrating his wrath against the rebels by daily beheading two captives in front of the city walls. Fourteen had thus perished in the sight of their friends before he relented and put a stop to the spectacle. The Parmese, if they suspected man or woman of acting as the Emperor's spies, would torture them until they confessed to guilt and then burn them in the public square.

By the end of 1247 the Emperor had almost surrounded Parma with his works, and at the strongest point of his fortifications had erected a castle and commenced to build a city around it. Houses and ramparts were constructed, and the river which supplied Parma with water was diverted to feed a canal for the benefit of the new city. It bore the haughty name of Vittoria, and in its castle was stored all the treasure which Frederick had collected for the campaign. Its mint issued golden coins and within its ramparts were stored vast quantities of provisions, arms and tents and many military engines.

The besieged town, completly isolated from its friends, gave up all hope of relief. The Guelfs of Northern Italy could give it no more assistance. They had sent their troops to aid in its defence, but they dare not advance

to its succour when so formidable an army, under the victor of Cortenuova, must first be encountered in the open field. The surrender of the city could not be long delayed. Its non-militant populace was starving, the soldiers themselves commenced to tighten their belts. Desperate sallies were made but were beaten back with heavy losses. The Imperial army, confident of a speedy victory, grew careless and relaxed its vigilance.

One fatal morning, on the 18th of February, 1248, Frederick rode out of Vittoria with some of his knights on a hunting expedition. An hour afterwards some Milanese and Placentines sallied from the Southern gate of Parma, and Lancia, with a great body of cavalry, left Vittoria to support the Imperial troops at the point of attack. The sally was merely a feint. Montelengo gathered together every available man in the city and dashed at Vittoria. It was a forlorn hope and the desperate citizens resolved to perish rather than return to starvation.

Thaddaeus of Suessa was in command at Vittoria and was at first inclined to scorn all thought of danger. "What!" he cried, "have the rats left their holes?" But the fortifications, denuded of a large portion of their garrison, were unable to withstand the furious onslaught of the Parmese. The hunger-maddened crowds swept over the ditches and walls and hewed the defenders down. Thaddaeus of Suessa was seized and torn limb from limb. The Imperial troops were overwhelmed with panic and fled, pursued by the Lombard knights.

The victorious citizens worked their will on Vittoria. Inestimable stores of treasure fell into their hands, money and jewels, vessels of gold and silver, robes of silk and precious fabrics; even the very Crown of the Empire, with the Sceptre and the Imperial seals. The Crown was seized by a Parmese dwarf, who placed it on his head and strutted derisively through the streets of the jubilant city.

The Emperor, taking his pleasure in the chase, saw far away on the horizon the flames of his burning castle and town. He mounted his charger and spurred towards the scene of disaster. He had galloped but a few miles when he was met by a vast multitude of his soldiers, flying in disorderly terror from the pursuing foe. He dashed into their midst, strove vainly to rally them, but was himself swept backward and onward by their impetuous rush, far along the road to Cremona.

That city, whose streets had so often rung with the clamour of welcome and ovation, now received with gloomy silence the frowning Emperor who entered in the evening at the head of his shamefaced army. The Cremonese had lost their Carroccio and many of their best men in the fall of Vittoria. One angry burgher shouted out: "You too, Emperor, ought to have your head struck off, since you left Vittoria for those accursed sports of yours." His fellows expected to see him dragged away to the gallows, but the Emperor bore the reproach in silence. Hard words were nothing after the humiliation of that day.

Loud were the exultations of the Guelfs. Parma

might henceforth be called Palma : she was the chief shield and defence of the Church. The Emperor had been forsaken by his familiar devils, Baalzebub and Ashtaroth. The capture of the pretty dears of his harem had grieved his heart beyond all the men and treasures he had lost. Let Brescia and Milan rejoice ; let Genoa, Piacenza and Mantua, Venice and Ancona break forth into joy. Woe to Pavia, the modern Babylon; to Pisa, the handmaid of Pilate ; to Cremona, howling over the loss of her Carroccio. Even the Pope contributed an appropriate verse :—

> " Vittoria, vanquished thou dost lie,
> That Christ His name may glorify ! "

The Emperor's pride had received a mortal wound, but his arm had not yet lost its weight nor his name its terror. A few days after their victory, the Parmese, supported by eighty-seven ships which had come up the Po from Mantua and Ferrara, made an attempt to destroy a bridge which Frederick had erected across the river. The rumour suddenly spread through their ranks that the Emperor was approaching and one and all incontinently fled, leaving the ships to be seized by the Cremonese. They had reoccupied many castles in the neighbourhood, but were quickly driven back into their city by Frederick and his captains, and the Imperial army again encamped on the site of Vittoria.

Innocent, alarmed at the quick recovery of the Emperor's cause, exhorted all the Guelfic cities to hasten

to the assistance of Parma, and issued numerous excommunications against the supporters of Antichrist. Frederick himself had already been adequately cursed, but now anathemas were launched against his sons and grandsons and all states and nobles and clergy who should send their envoys to his Court. King Louis, who passed through Lyons on his way to the Crusades, made one last effort to intercede for Frederick. The Emperor, he said, had promised to join him in Palestine if the Pope would annul the sentence of Lyons. But Innocent replied that peace should never be made while Frederick and his brood held the Empire. "Holy Father," cried Louis, "the ruin of the Holy Land will lie at your door."

As for Frederick, he had abandoned the hope of securing justice from "that old serpent," "that good Shepherd of the Church!" He avowed that he would never again seek for peace until it was sought from him. "We who read and examine into the annals of history," writes Matthew Paris, "never found such an instance of intense and inexorable hatred as that which existed between Frederick and the Pope."

The Emperor was still in the neighbourhood of Parma in June. The Milanese and Placentines marched out against him but fled by night at his approach. In July he left the command at Cremona in the hands of Enzio and himself proceeded northwards to Piedmont. The Marquess of Montferrat was induced to return to his allegiance by the burning of his castles and the wasting of his lands. Vercelli surrendered to the Emperor with-

out a struggle, and here he stayed for the remainder of the year.

All the nobles of Piedmont flocked to his Court, and many ambassadors of foreign kings, who thus testified to their continued recognition of Frederick as Emperor in spite of the Papal deposition. The Count of Savoy came to betroth his daughter to Manfred, the youngest of those natural sons of Frederick who figured at all prominently in the history of the day. Many favours were bestowed upon those cities and nobles who had remained faithful to the Emperor; nor were those forgotten who had lost husbands or fathers in the disaster of Vittoria.

His fame remained still undiminished. Indeed, the amazement and absorbing interest which he excited in the minds of men increased as he rose triumphant after his defeat and continued to defy the sentence of the Pope. The Scriptures were searched for prophecies which, by devious ways, might be found to apply to his name. The great magician Merlin was said to have foretold that he should live in prosperity for seventy-two years, that nothing but the hand of God could strike him down.

The more ardent of his supporters, drifting further and further away from the old doctrines and the established order of religious things, began to regard him as something more than an earthly potentate. He should come to be Lord of the world in spiritual as well as earthly things. He was a second Messiah, and Peter de Vinea, happily named, was the first among his disciples,

the rock upon whom he should build his Church. This strange and fanatical devotion was shared even by ecclesiastics of high position. The Archbishop of Capua, unable to reach the Court through the bad state of the roads, wrote thus to de Vinea: "If the cup of this journey may not pass from me, I am ready to cast myself not only into the mud, but into the sea, that I may walk on the waters towards the Lord. And thou, Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

There were some who would have liked to see the new Messiah openly proclaimed, to have seen his trusted minister assume the position which the Pope falsely held as the Vicar of Christ. "Do not hide your light under a bushel," wrote one to de Vinea. "Our Lord says unto you: 'Peter, you love me; feed my sheep.' He has set you up in opposition to that false Vicar of Christ who is abusing the power of the keys. Do not shrink from the burden because you are not used to it; your honesty, your moderation, your strength recommend you for it; our Lord will take no denial; you must answer, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. Thy will be done.'"

But the minister, whom Frederick had raised up from the dust to the highest post in the Kingdom, upon whom he had heaped riches and honour, whom he had admitted to his confidence and intimate affection, was to prove himself more nearly allied to Judas than to that Peter who merely denied his Lord. The reasons of the terrible tragedy of his end are wrapped in gloom. But from many conflicting accounts we may accept that of

Matthew Paris as most reliable and most generally credited in Europe. He was the only chronicler who wrote contemporaneously of the event, and his version is confirmed by Frederick's own letters.

In the beginning of 1249 Frederick returned from Vercelli to Cremona, where he was seized with an illness. The Imperial physician was in a Parmese prison, and Peter, who, it was said, had been bribed by the Pope, offered the services of his own physician to the royal patient. This functionary, probably himself in the Pope's pay, or merely obeying his master, mixed a strong and deadly poison in the draught he prepared. Frederick, however, had been informed of the plot, and said to Peter and the physician : " My friends, my soul confides in you : take care, I entreat you, not to give me poison instead of medicine." " My Lord," answered Peter, " my physician has often given you wholesome and beneficial medicine ; why, therefore, do you now fear ? "

Frederick scowled and turned to the physician. " Drink half this medicine with me." The trembling man took hold of the cup and purposely spilt its contents on the floor. But a few drops remained, and Frederick commanded that these should be given to some criminals who were already condemned to the gallows. The wretches expired in horrible agony and the physician was straightway taken out and hanged.

A full council of nobles was immediately summoned to judge the greater culprit, and letters were produced which proved the Pope's connivance in the crime. The

sentence of death was passed upon Peter, but not a speedy death. His eyes were put out and he was led through several cities on an ass, while the crier proclaimed his treachery. But on the way to Pisa, whose citizens for some reasons bore him an inexorable hatred, and into whose mercy he was to be delivered for the final penalty, he wrought his own destruction by dashing his brains out against a stone pillar to which he was chained. His terrible downfall was long remembered in Italy, but Dante exculpates him from the crime and attributes his apparent guilt to the machinations of jealous rivals.

"Frederick, on reflecting on this circumstance," writes Matthew, "grieved inconsolably and with abundance of tears, which is a pitiable sight in a person of such authority and such an age; and clasping his hands together, exclaimed, 'Woe is me, for my own bowels fight against me; this Peter, whom I believed to be a rock, and who was the half of my life, laid a plot for my death. In whom shall I now place confidence? where can I henceforth be safe, where happy?' His friends who sat around him joined in his grief, with sighs and tears. And by this occurrence the Pope's fame was much deteriorated; but God alone knows the truth."

From the scene of this tragedy Frederick, stricken in spirit by the treachery of his trusted friend, returned to his Kingdom in the March of 1249. But he had not yet had his fill of grief, for the news of another disaster followed hard on his heels. Enzio, the best beloved of his sons, the gallant knight, the fearless soldier, the

troubadour, the winner of all hearts, was captured by his enemies and consigned to a lifelong captivity.

While Enzio was ravaging the country round Parma, the Cardinal Octavian gathered the whole force of Bologna together and advanced against Modena. Enzio dashed back to the help of the besieged town, was met for once by the Papal forces in the open field, and after a long and sanguinary battle, was utterly defeated and, with over a thousand of his men, led a prisoner to Bologna.

Frederick threatened the city with destruction, but to no avail; promised to encircle its walls with a ring of gold if only it would restore his son to him. The citizens refused all ransom, and he dare not carry his threat into effect and besiege the city lest the enraged townsmen should put Enzio to death. He could only wait, in the hope that some day he should be able to enforce a general peace from all his enemies, in which the release of his son should be included.

That release never came, and Enzio languished in his prison for three-and-twenty years. He was treated with great consideration, for even among his enemies his personal charm exerted its sway and procured him many friends amongst the higher citizens. A noble maiden named Lucia Viadalgo became enamoured of him and solaced him in his captivity for several years. Once he almost managed to escape, was concealed in a cask and conveyed to the gates of the city. But one of his long golden locks was hanging outside the cask and attracted the attention of the guards. His treatment

henceforth became more rigorous, until death released him in later middle age. He was buried by his captors with all the honours befitting his rank, and his tomb is still to be seen in the Dominican church of Bologna.

Innocent, meanwhile, freed from the restraining influence of King Louis, who had departed to Palestine, redoubled his attempts to bring his enemy to destruction. He turned all his energies to the task of shaking Frederick's power in the Kingdom, which still remained firm in its allegiance. He anticipated his own victory by bestowing its territory upon his adherents and by issuing a number of new laws for its government. The Papal fulminations were again repeated against all who should continue to regard Frederick as King. Every Bishop or priest who should dare to accept a favour from him was to be deprived for ever of his office. All cities and nobles who espoused his cause were to be stripped of their privileges and to be tainted with everlasting infamy. The adherents of the deposed monarch were to be outlawed from all the rights of citizenship, were to be outcasts against whom every man might raise his hand. But those who should rise against Frederick should be shriven of all their sins.

Frederick himself was driven to ruthless severity by these measures, and by the sedition which the begging friars preached in every corner of the Kingdom. All traitors who were proved to be guilty—they must be condemned by the mouth of two witnesses, for justice must still be maintained—were to be hung. The friars,

who were "crawling about the land like crabs," were no longer to be imprisoned or banished, but burnt alive.

The Pope could do little to shake the loyalty of the Kingdom. In Central Italy the Emperor's cause was still triumphant. Cardinal Regnier was defeated at Civita Nuova with the loss of 2000 men. Cardinal Capoccio was routed a few months later. Town after town fell into the hands of the Emperor's captains. The conflict became more violent and ruthless between the rival forces as each month went by, and Central Italy became a scene of carnage and desolation.

In Lombardy also the fortunes of the Emperor were in the ascendant. Cremona had won a great battle over Parma, had captured her Carroccio and some thousands of her soldiers. Eccelin de Romano had reduced the strongest castle of the Marquess of Este. Piacenza, which had been among the most stubborn of the rebellious cities, had proclaimed her allegiance to the Emperor. Milan and Brescia were losing heart and becoming feeble in their aggression.

In Christendom the mass of public opinion was becoming warm in his favour and disgusted with the violence and blind fury of the Pope's hostility. In the pages of the English chronicler we find entries such as this : "By some it was positively affirmed that the Pope eagerly desired, above all things, to overthrow Frederick, whom he called the great dragon, in order that, he being trampled underfoot and crushed, he might more easily trample down the French and English Kings, and

the other Kings of Christendom (all of whom he called 'petty princes,' and 'the little serpents'), who would be frightened by the case of the said Frederick, and might despoil them and their Prelates of their property at his pleasure. These speeches, together with the enormous deeds which bore powerful evidence to the meaning of his words, generated offence in the hearts of many, and strengthened the justice of Frederick's, so that his cause began to improve daily."

A more definite ground for displeasure against the Popes was the ruin they had wrought to the cause of the Church in Palestine. What had the Popes done for Christendom in these latter times, men asked, that might be compared with the Emperor's achievement on his Crusade? If the fruits of that achievement had been lost, it was because the partisans of the Pope had broken the truce which Frederick had made with the Sultan, and because the persistent enmity of the Popes had prevented Frederick from again taking the Cross. The Emperor had still continued to aid the Crusaders, had maintained a force in the East under his Marshal, had interceded with the Sultan of Egypt and secured the release of a great number of French prisoners. He was now helping King Louis in his Crusade by sending him vast stores of provisions, in spite of the heavy demand upon his resources made by his wars. He was the one monarch who, by virtue of his material power and the high prestige which he enjoyed among the Infidels, might still restore the Holy Land to the Christians. He had offered to spend his life in Palestine in the

fulfilment of this object if the Pope would give him peace.

What had been Innocent's conduct in the matter, men asked? He had refused to grant peace to the Emperor, in spite of the intercession of King Louis and Queen Blanche. He had diverted the money which had been contributed by Christendom for the Crusades to the prosecution of his own schemes against the Emperor. He had obtained more money by selling to many who had taken the Cross an absolution from their vows. He had still further depleted the ranks of the Crusaders by commanding all those who had taken the Cross in Germany and Italy to turn their arms against Frederick instead of against the Turks.

The disastrous defeat of King Louis in Egypt raised the resentment against Innocent to a dangerous height. He was accused by the French of being the sole cause of the ruin of the expedition and of the disgrace of the French Crown. The two brothers of Louis journeyed home from Acre and threatened to bring the whole French nation about the Pope's ears if he did not straightway make his peace with the Emperor.

Innocent's position became more insecure every month. Those nobles of Arles who had formerly been his protectors were returning to their rightful Lord. He sought leave from England to take up his abode at Bordeaux, but met with a decided refusal. Bordeaux was too near to London, and Englishmen had no mind to see the Pope in their own country.

With his arms triumphant in Northern Italy, with the

half of Germany still holding firm to its allegiance, with his powerful Western neighbour bidding fair to make common cause with him against the Pope, it might seem that the Emperor would yet wrest an honourable peace from his foe. But Frederick himself knew that the smiles of Fortune had come too late. He had turned his face to the wall : he was sick unto death.

Chapter XVII

THE FALL OF NIGHT

FROM that day of 1245 when his messengers had brought to him at Turin the news of his deposition, a deep gloom had gradually settled upon Frederick's soul. He realised then that the struggle in which the greater part of his life had been wasted was to continue to the end. He looked around his dominions, which, had he been spared the immitigable hatred of the Papacy, had he been able to employ those gifts with which nature had so richly endowed him, would have presented a smiling aspect of peace, prosperity and intellectual advancement. Instead he saw Germany and Italy given over to violence and discord; and his Kingdom, deprived of his fostering care and burdened by a heavy load of taxation, faltering on that road of progress along which, in his happier days, he had led it with so sure a hand.

We can see him as he toils through the last years of his life, a man with set joyless face, labouring under the most venomous curses of the Church; a man by some greatly hated, by some greatly loved, and by all greatly feared. He is conscious of the heavy destiny he must fulfil; he has set his hand to the plough and will not turn back; he has resolved to end his days in an almost hopeless struggle rather than purchase an ignominious peace. He

is subject sometimes, when he has brooded over-long upon his wrongs, to passionate storms of wrath, in which it fares ill with those of his enemies who have fallen into his hands; if they have offended grievously against him they may call upon God for a speedy death, for all his wisdom and enlightenment have not triumphed over the cruelty of his age, nor purged his blood of that taint which is part of the heritage of the Hohenstaufen race.

The beginning of the year 1250 found him plunged in a profound melancholy. The shame of that flight before Parma, when his soldiers had swept him with them in their panic, had rankled sorely in his mind. The death of Thaddaeus of Suessa in the same disaster had been an irreparable loss. The treachery of Peter de Vinea, in whom for more than twenty years he had placed implicit trust and affection, had overwhelmed him with bitterness: with that tragedy the iron had entered into his soul. It needed only the imprisonment of Enzio, the being who held the largest place in his heart, to leave him broken and weary of the burden of life.

He was smitten towards the end of 1249 with a slow but mortal disease. It seemed but a mockery of fate that at the twelfth hour his fortunes should begin to improve, while he himself was slowly losing his hold on the world. In the November of 1250 his illness overcame him while on the road to Lucera. He was compelled to halt at Fiorentino and took to his bed. His son Manfred, the fruit of his love for Bianca Lancia, was by his side, and Berard, the old Archbishop of Palermo, who had accompanied the Boy of Sicily northwards in 1212 and

had adhered to him with unswerving loyalty despite all the anathemas of the Pope.

On the 10th of December he made his will, "with deep sighs and declaring he had rather never have been born, or assumed the government of the Empire, in the recovery and support of whose rights he had been involved in so many and such bitter sorrows." [1] The Empire and the Kingdom were left to Conrad and his heirs; failing such heirs he was to be succeeded first by Henry and then by Manfred. The latter was to be the Regent of the Kingdom during Conrad's absence in Germany, and was to receive certain territories as his own domain. A hundred thousand ounces of gold were to be devoted to the succour of the Holy Land, for the benefit of the Emperor's soul. All prisoners were to be set free, except traitors. All who had been faithful to their Lord were to be rewarded. The Holy Roman Church was to be restored to all her rights, saving only the honour of the Empire and his heirs, and provided that the Church restored the rights of the Empire in turn.

The end came soon afterwards. On December the 13th, 1250, "Frederick, the greatest of earthly princes, the wonder of the world and the regulator of its proceedings, departed this life." [2] By his own wish, or in kindly response to the entreaties of his old friend, he had received absolution from the Archbishop of Palermo before his death.

His body, arrayed in the Imperial robes and covered with a pall of crimson silk, guarded by an escort of

[1] Matthew Paris. [2] Matthew Paris.

Saracens and six troops of knights, was borne through wailing villages and towns to the Port of Taranto. From there it was brought to Messina and thence to Palermo, where it was laid near to the graves of his Imperial father, his mother and his first wife. The traveller at Palermo may still see the granite and porphyry tomb of him who was the wonder of the world.

. . . . . .

"Herod is dead," cried the Vicar of Christ; "now let earth and heaven break forth into joy at this great deliverance." "Down to hell he went," wrote the Papal chronicler, "taking with him nought but a burden of sin." The Friar Salimbene rushed to the 14th chapter of Isaiah. Here was the fall of Lucifer, cast down from heaven. He who had sought to exalt his throne above the stars of God, he that had made the earth to tremble and the Kingdoms to shake, was brought down to hell and hell from beneath was moved to meet him. "Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise and possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities."

The hatred that had pursued Frederick during his life could not be assuaged by his death. It fastened upon his house and only relaxed its hold when the last of the accursed Hohenstaufen brood had perished on the scaffold. Manfred had to hasten back from the burial of his father to defend the Kingdom, over which he was Regent during Conrad's absence. He had already been accused of having poisoned the Emperor by his

ecclesiastical enemies. In 1251 Conrad, who had narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of the Papal party, abandoned his hold on Germany and assumed the government and defence of the Kingdom.

The young Henry was the first of Frederick's descendants to die: the Pope must needs charge Conrad with poisoning his brother. Conrad sickened and died in 1254: his death was laid at Manfred's door by the Papal chroniclers.

There remained of Frederick's male descendants only Manfred, and Conradin, the infant son of Conrad. For twelve years Manfred resisted all the efforts of the Popes to overthrow him. Poet, scholar, soldier and consummate diplomatist, he was the worthy son of a great sire. He survived Innocent, who died, men said, in an agony of terror and remorse. Manfred extended his power as far as Tuscany under Innocent's successor, Alexander IV. Pope Urban IV, unable to subdue him, sought for a powerful ally. The Crown of the Kingdom had already been sold by Innocent to Edmund, the son of Henry III of England. That Prince showed no desire to embark upon a perilous struggle for its acquisition, and accordingly it was sold again to Charles of Anjou, the brother of King Louis of France. Manfred resisted Charles for some time but was defeated and slain at Benevento in 1266. His widow and children were thrown into prison by the conqueror and died in captivity.

The Sicilians, ground into dust by their new master, called upon Conradin, a boy of fifteen years, to deliver them. He invaded the Kingdom with 4000 Germans,

was joined by the oppressed populace, and gained several victories over the French usurper. But in 1268 he was defeated and captured, and beheaded in the public square of Naples. So ended the race of the Hohenstaufens.

Yet so largely had the greatest of that race loomed in the imagination of mankind that many decades passed away before the subjects of Frederick would be convinced that he himself had disappeared for ever from the earth. In 1259 an impostor arose in Sicily who proclaimed himself to be Frederick: he declared that he had been allowed to return to the world after having expiated his sin for nine years. He gathered many nobles of Sicily and Apulia round him, but was overpowered and slain by Manfred. Twenty-six years later another false Frederick appeared in Germany and attracted so much attention that many of the Lombard nobles and states sent their envoys to enquire into the truth of his identity. He was seized by Rudolf of Hapsburg, who after an interregnum of twenty years had secured the Kingship of Germany, and was burned at the stake. Even in 1290, when Frederick would have been a man of ninety-six years of age, there were barons in Germany ready to wager that their old Hohenstaufen Kaiser was still alive; that he would return some day at the head of a mighty force and restore the departed glories of the Holy Roman Empire.

Chapter XVIII

STUPOR MUNDI

THE monk of St. Albans, in bestowing upon Frederick the title of "the wonder of the world," deems it unnecessary to enlarge upon that title by comment and explanation. We may take it that he is but recording the universal opinion of his age. The magnificent and unparalleled figure of the Roman Emperor had excited in his generation a sentiment of wonder, and whether men marvelled at him with admiration or deprecation, to friend and enemy alike he was a being whose career and personality evoked surpassing interest and profound surprise.

We may conceive easily enough how this sentiment had arisen. The sudden change in his fortunes, which in his youth had elevated him from the position of a powerless King to that of the first monarch of Christendom, had no doubt attracted considerable attention; and from henceforth, by virtue of his high office, he could no longer remain in obscurity. But it was the circumstances of his Crusade that first made him the cynosure of all eyes. His abortive embarkation for the Holy Land and the excommunication which had been immediately launched against him formed a dramatic prelude. His subsequent departure in defiance of the

ban of the Church and the attack which the enraged Pope had made upon his dominions, offered to Europe the strange spectacle of an Emperor leading a Crusade who was himself the object of a Crusade. The extraordinary success which he had obtained by peaceful means, in spite of the persistent antagonism of the Papal party, had earned him the admiring gratitude of Christendom ; while at the same time his friendly intercourse with the Sultan and his broad-minded attitude towards the Infidels had mingled with that admiration an emotion of shocked amazement.

He had returned to his European dominions with his dignity enhanced by the acquisition of the Crown of Jerusalem, and had wrested from the Pope the revocation of the sentence of excommunication. Men had then gradually become informed of his astonishing mental attainments, had learnt of how he could discourse with Jews, Arabians, Frenchmen, Italians and Germans in their own tongues, of how he had mastered the learning of Greece and Rome, of how he could meet on terms of equality, if not of superiority, with the greatest scholars of his age in every branch of knowledge. The elegance and magnificence of his Court, its Oriental splendour and its cosmopolitan hospitality, had been noised abroad. His maintenance of a harem, though it would have passed unnoticed had he been merely the King of Sicily, became a glaring defiance of propriety in one who was the chief monarch of Christendom : men whispered in horrified undertones that he was even suspected of indulging in carnal pleasures with Infidel women. He had ignored the prejudices

of his day by planting a colony of Saracens in the very heart of his Kingdom and by employing them as his soldiers. He had flouted religious bigotry by allowing Greeks, Jews and Infidels to worship as they pleased. He was even said to have derided the Immaculate Conception, to have placed Christ on a level with Moses and Mahomet, to have become almost a Saracen himself in belief and in manner of life.

His system of government had aroused much the same interest and surprise as would be excited in our own day by the spectacle of a monarch trampling down the established forces of democracy and erecting a despotism upon their ruins. In every other country the royal power was subservient to aristocratic and ecclesiastical privilege. In England the barons had wrested the Great Charter from John, were soon to rise successfully against Henry III. In France the dynasty of Capet had hardly yet begun to assert its supremacy over the forces of feudalism. In the Kingdom of Sicily, however, the nobles and ecclesiastics were stripped of every privilege which conflicted with the royal authority, and a perfectly centralised organisation had been erected in which all power emanated from the King.

Frederick had then entered upon the final stage of that long and bitter struggle with the Papacy which was to endure until his death. This combat between the temporal and the spiritual power, the most vital feature of the history of the Middle Ages, enlisted the passionate interest of the inhabitants of every Christian country: and Frederick, as the object of a peculiarly venomous

hatred, as the most redoubtable champion of the temporal cause, had loomed gigantically in the vision of men. His high-handed assertion of the Imperial supremacy in the capture of Gregory's Council had been but an astonishing incident of the struggle : a more lasting marvel lay in his steadfast maintaining of his independence. Where Henry IV had knelt in penitence at Canossa, where Barbarossa had flung himself before the feet of the Pope at Venice, Frederick had never humiliated himself before the Vicar of Christ. John of England had submitted himself and his realm to Innocent III : his successor was too feeble to resist the extortions of the Papal tax-gatherers. The proud Philip Augustus of France had been compelled by the Pope to put away the wife he loved and reinstate a divorced and discarded Queen. There was scarcely a King or Prince in Christendom who had not bowed before the threats of Rome. Frederick alone had resisted to the end, had survived the most furious assaults of Gregory and Innocent, had defied the sentence of deposition and had worn his crowns with scarcely diminished power until the day of his death.

Thus around his name there had gathered a glamour of strangeness and splendour, of genius soaring to perilous questionings of eternal truths, of unbreakable resolution and of unconquerable pride. To his ardent supporters he had become the new Messiah, to his frenzied enemies the Antichrist. To those who stood outside the immediate fury of the strife he was a being beyond the common range of human experience and comprehension. He was

the dominating spirit of his age, the supreme centre of interest and wonder, *stupor mundi et immutator mirabilis.*

The historian Freeman has called him "the most gifted of the sons of men; by nature the more than peer of Alexander, of Constantine, and of Charles; in mere genius, in mere accomplishments, the greatest prince who ever wore a crown." So rare an eulogy needs something more than a distinguished source to render it acceptable, but it will bear the scrutiny of scepticism passably well. Certain it is that in his tremendous intellect, in his cultured and enquiring mind, in his broad spirit of toleration, he towered far above his contemporaries: that his system of jurisprudence, his educational and economic regulations, betrayed a singularly enlightened conception of the arts of government. If the more cautious among us may hesitate to endorse the eulogy of Freeman with enthusiasm and conviction, we can at any rate follow him so far as this: we can, nay, we must admit, that in genius Frederick has had no superior among the princes of the world, and that in the potentialities of greatness as a ruler he excelled many who have earned the title of 'great.' That title would assuredly have been his, had not the enmity of the Papacy prevented him from exercising those potentialities.

"Frederick belongs to no age," continues the same writer; "intellectually he is above his own age, above every age; morally it can hardly be denied that he was below his age; but in nothing was he of his age." If we may accept Freeman's praise of Frederick with some diffidence, we can reject his condemnation with con-

fidence. The vices of the Hohenstaufen Emperor stand out in dark relief against the general enlightenment of his character. His duplicity, cruelty and licentiousness were lamentable enough. But they do not place him morally below his age, for his faults were essentially the faults of his age and of his country.

It was inevitable that Frederick, surrounded from his childhood by intrigues and hostile ambitions, should absorb within himself some of the craft and dissimulation with which he was thus familiarised. He was never the complete Machiavellian, but he was ready enough to employ guile and subterfuge when it seemed profitable. "Pretend some business," he writes to one of his captains whom he has ordered to obtain possession of a strong castle, "and warily call the Castellan to you: seize on him if you can and keep him till he cause the castle to be surrendered to you." This is a fair example of his duplicity and does not argue in him a high conception of public honour. But it is far removed from dark and damnable treachery, and it can be said in partial extenuation of such methods that no ruler ever prospered in Mediæval Italy who disdained the wisdom of the serpent.

We need only glance through the pages of any chronicler of Frederick's time to see that in his cruelty he certainly did not exceed the guilt of his contemporaries. We can read, for instance, in Salimbene, of the fate of Alberic de Romano, who, with his wife and family, fell into the hands of his enemies in the year 1260. His six sons, some of them mere children, were hewn into pieces before his eyes and their bleeding limbs thrust into his

face. His wife and daughters were stripped from the waist downwards, were paraded through the streets and finally burnt at the stake. After he had witnessed their dying agonies his own flesh was torn with red-hot pincers and his tortured body dragged to death at the tail of a horse. Frederick never descended to such barbarity as this. Nor can he be condemned as below his age when that age had witnessed the atrocities of the Albigensian Crusade, perpetrated with the sanction of the Papacy, hideously sanctified by the pretext of religious zeal. If in his last years, goaded into frequent fits of sinister fury by his implacable enemies, rendered vindictive by treacherous attempts upon his life, Frederick became indiscriminate in his vengeance, his cruelty at any rate was never a lust : he was no Eccelin de Romano to gloat over the sufferings of his victims. It was rather an excessive form of severity. We can understand that in an age when such crimes as forgery and theft were punished by execution, a painless death seemed an utterly inadequate penalty for traitors. His cruelty was certainly not greater, either in quantity or quality, than that of his enemies : and on occasions he showed a generous clemency to his defeated foes.

In the matter of sexual morality, the greatest minds have rarely consented to be bound by the code which is accepted by their fellow-men. Frederick was no exception to this rule. Bound by no rigid system of religious belief he was a law unto himself : entirely contemptuous of the conventions of his inferiors—and all men in his sight were the inferior of Cæsar—he made

no effort to hide from the world the licence which that self-made law permitted him to enjoy. Yet in this vice, as in others, he was not below the standard of his age. The Church itself, which we might expect to represent the highest morality of the time, was besmirched with lewdness from the highest to the lowest of its grades. If the Popes themselves, either through virtue or old age, had renounced the lusts of the flesh, the Papal Court was notorious throughout Europe and polluted every city in which it sojourned. "We found three or four houses of ill fame when we came hither," said the Cardinal Hugh of St. Cher when the Court was leaving Lyons to return to Italy after Frederick's death; "and now, at our departure, we leave the whole city one continuous brothel." Another Cardinal, the warlike Gregory of Montelengo, was reputed to have as many lemans as the Emperor himself. The vow of chastity was openly violated by the parish priests and the abuse of the confessional was widely prevalent. It is significant enough that in the many conditions of peace which were at one time or another demanded from Frederick by the Papacy, he was never commanded to put away his concubines. His supposed intercourse with Infidel women formed one of the charges set forth against him at the Council of Lyons, but his sins with Christian women were ignored. The Church knew too well that in this matter she could not cast the first stone.

He was entirely Oriental in his sexual conduct. He may have been profoundly attached to Bianca Lancia, or to one of his legitimate wives, but their position was only

that of the favoured Sultana : they never enjoyed the monopoly of his embraces. He was not a hunter of women : surrounded by a bevy of complaisant beauties who existed solely for his own pleasure, the wives of his subjects were safe from his regards. Yet this Orientalism, though less mischievous than the roving amorousness of a Charles the Second, is less easy to condone. It is sensuality without sentiment, devoid of the glamour of romance ; a mere satisfaction of erotic impulse or bodily appetite rather than ardent passion or impetuous desire. It is unforgivable in one of his enlightened mind. We may concede that his morality was not lower than that of his age ; but we cannot deny that he transgressed the bounds of that licence which, if we would be tolerant, we must regard as the peculiar privilege of princes.

To the men of his own country these faults in Frederick's character were ordinary enough : they were the sins that might be laid to the charge of any ruler, great or small, in Mediæval Italy. But there was an offence which, in the eyes of a superstitious age, was far more grievous than these. It is not for lewdness or cruelty or treachery that Dante consigns Frederick to hell, but for unbelief. The poet, Imperialist though he is, cannot ignore the accusation which was made against the Emperor by his enemies, which was confirmed by his own hasty and scornful words. Frederick is an " illustrious hero," his character is " of nobility and righteousness " ; but nevertheless, because he doubted the eternal truths, his portion is among the heresiarchs in hell.

How far the popular impression of his scepticism was

correct it is, of course, impossible to determine. It is unlikely that he was an atheist, for when he realised that the hand of death was upon him, he said, " The will of God be done." We may believe, however, that a mind of such broad and catholic culture could not but revolt against the narrow dogma of the Church : that mingling in himself the civilisation of both Christendom and Mohammedanism, he viewed the two religions with a certain detachment, and regarded with impatience the claims of either to exclusive infallibility : that to his scientific and enquiring mind any sharply defined doctrine would be unacceptable, especially when it contained so large an element of superstition as the religious belief of his day. Unprovoked by the Papal enmity, he might have veiled his opinions in discreet silence ; but harassed beyond measure by an unjust persecution, he was occasionally stung into deriding the religion of which his arch enemy was the earthly head.

To have endorsed these hasty utterances before the world by a public confession of his unorthodoxy would have involved himself and his house in immediate and irretrievable ruin. It was not to be expected that he would gratify the Pope and surrender all for which he had struggled by thus encompassing his own destruction. Such a suicide would have been a black crime in his eyes, a betrayal of his high charge as the guardian of the Imperial heritage, as the champion of mankind against the tyranny of the Popes. He did not hesitate therefore, when publicly charged with the awful sin of heresy, to refute that charge by a vigorous assertion of his

implicit faith in the tenets of Christianity. We may even believe that he made this assertion in all good faith, that he considered it incumbent upon him in his public capacity to uphold and maintain a religion which was inextricably mingled with social order and human virtue. Only in the light of this belief can we understand his persecution of heretics, for we may dismiss far from our minds the suspicion of odious hypocrisy which that persecution would otherwise fasten upon his name.

It is always more easy to define the vices of a man than his virtues. The vices of Frederick can be exemplified by material things, his licentiousness by the harem that he maintained for his pleasure, his cruelty by the leaden cope, said to be his own invention, under the weight of which his victims slowly wearied to death. For his great qualities we must look with a wider view, must envisage his whole life. We must note that fine pride which enabled him to resist the allurements of a life of peacefulness and cultured ease, and to end his days in ceaseless warfare and toil. We must regard the all-powerful intellect, the mind freed from the trammels of religious bigotry, the enlightened measures for the prosperity and mental elevation of his people. How far in him the good exceeded the evil, the light triumphed over the darkness, may be gathered from the men who were his friends. The saintly Louis of France found in him more righteousness than in the Vicar of Christ. Hermann von Salza, a man of blameless life and lofty reputation, was his loyal friend and trusty servant as long as he lived.

Berard, the Archbishop of Palermo, against whose name there was no breath of calumny, clung to his side through excommunication and deposition, never denied to him the sacred offices forbidden by the Pope, absolved him on his deathbed and buried him with the full rites of the Church. Even that Pope who summoned in Charles of Anjou to extirpate his house could call him "the noble Frederick" and extol his government of the Kingdom.

But perhaps the most eloquent witness of the admiration he excited in his day lies in the words of one who should have been peculiarly bitter in his condemnation. Salimbene was a Minorite friar, a member of an order which was relentless in its antagonism to the Emperor and which therefore met with the severest repression at his hands. This chronicler speaks first as a friar should speak of one who was under the ban of the Church: "Of faith in God he had none; he was crafty, wily, avaricious, lustful, malicious, wrathful." But having thus enumerated Frederick's vices, he straightway relents, and continues: "And yet a gallant man at times, when he would show his kindness or courtesy; full of solace, jocund, delightful, fertile in devices. He knew to read, write and sing and to make songs and music. He was a comely man and well made, though of middle stature. I have seen him and once I loved him. . . . Moreover he knew to speak many and varied tongues; and to be brief, if he had been rightly Catholic and had loved God and His Church, he would have had few Emperors his equals in the world."

Yet this Emperor has left little visible impression upon the history of the world. So little indeed that, in England at least, the memory of him has almost vanished from the popular mind : and when the name of Frederick the Second is spoken, it is of his Prussian namesake of a later age that men think, a monarch of far lesser genius and smaller soul. The work that Frederick had been able to accomplish in his Kingdom was utterly destroyed by the invaders who came in answer to the Papal call : the land fell back into darkness and confusion : almost every trace of him was swept away. As for the Empire, there had been little enough work in that wider sphere that he had been allowed to do : the Papacy had seen to that. She knew better than to give him leisure to consolidate the Imperial sway. Frederick maintained the glory of the Empire during his reign by his personal renown : he even extended its territories. But it was diseased at the heart. It rested for its security upon the power of the German throne, and that had been fatally weakened by the long anarchy that had preceded Frederick's accession. He had been unable to remedy that weakness because all his energies had been absorbed in his struggle against the Papacy, and the Popes meanwhile had encouraged the turbulent Princes of Germany in sedition and had finally, by raising a rival Emperor to Frederick, rent Germany in twain. With Frederick's death and the extinction of his house the whole fabric of the Empire collapsed and the policy of the Papacy came to its triumph.

Frederick was thus the last of the great mediæval

Emperors. The Great Interregnum which ensued in Germany after his death lasted for over twenty years. Finally, Rudolf of Hapsburg built from the ruins of the Imperial power a precarious lordship of Germany which he dignified by the name of Empire. But meanwhile Sicily had passed to the House of Anjou ; the city states of Northern Italy had secured a complete independence ; and Burgundy had turned to France. The Empire of the Hapsburgs was but a shadow of the Empire of the Hohenstaufens.

Frederick has been denied the title of " great," but he has merited the gratitude of mankind. Most of all should Englishmen, who hold themselves to be lovers of those who fight in the cause of liberty, remember his name with reverence and admiration. For Frederick, though an autocrat, was yet a champion of freedom. He strove manfully, and with unwavering courage, against that priestly tyranny which menaced all Europe in his age. Wherever that tyranny has triumphed there have followed evil, oppression, and intolerance, the decay of nations and the abuse of power. England was saved from this, or at least from the danger of this, by Frederick the Second. She suffered grievously enough at the hands of the Popes under her feeble Kings John and Henry III : but if Frederick had not combated the Papal ambitions with all his power, drawn upon himself the full force of the Papal fury, and resisted the might of his enemy to the end, then the lot of England would have been immeasurably worse. If once " the great dragon " had been crushed, then assuredly " the little basilisks " would

have been trodden underfoot. But when Frederick had been overcome by death, when his race had been extinguished, and by the time another Pope had arisen of the stamp of Gregory IX and Innocent IV, an Edward I had appeared on the throne of England and a Philip IV on the throne of France. The nations were strong and the opportunity of the Popes had passed.

In his strife with the Papacy, then, lie at once the tragedy and the crown of Frederick's life: the tragedy since, being by nature so wonderfully endowed to govern a realm in peace and glory, he was yet denied the expression of his genius; the crown in that he did with his might the thing that his right hand found to do. And if a temple should ever be raised to the memory of those who have struggled for the freedom of man, then Frederick should find a high place in the sanctuary. And upon his image should be engraven the words that he himself uttered: "Let those who shrink from my support have the shame as well as the galling burden of slavery. Before this generation and before the generations to come, I will have the glory of resisting this tyranny."

THE END

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